THE MESSAGE
of the
NEW TESTAMENT

J·R·SMITH

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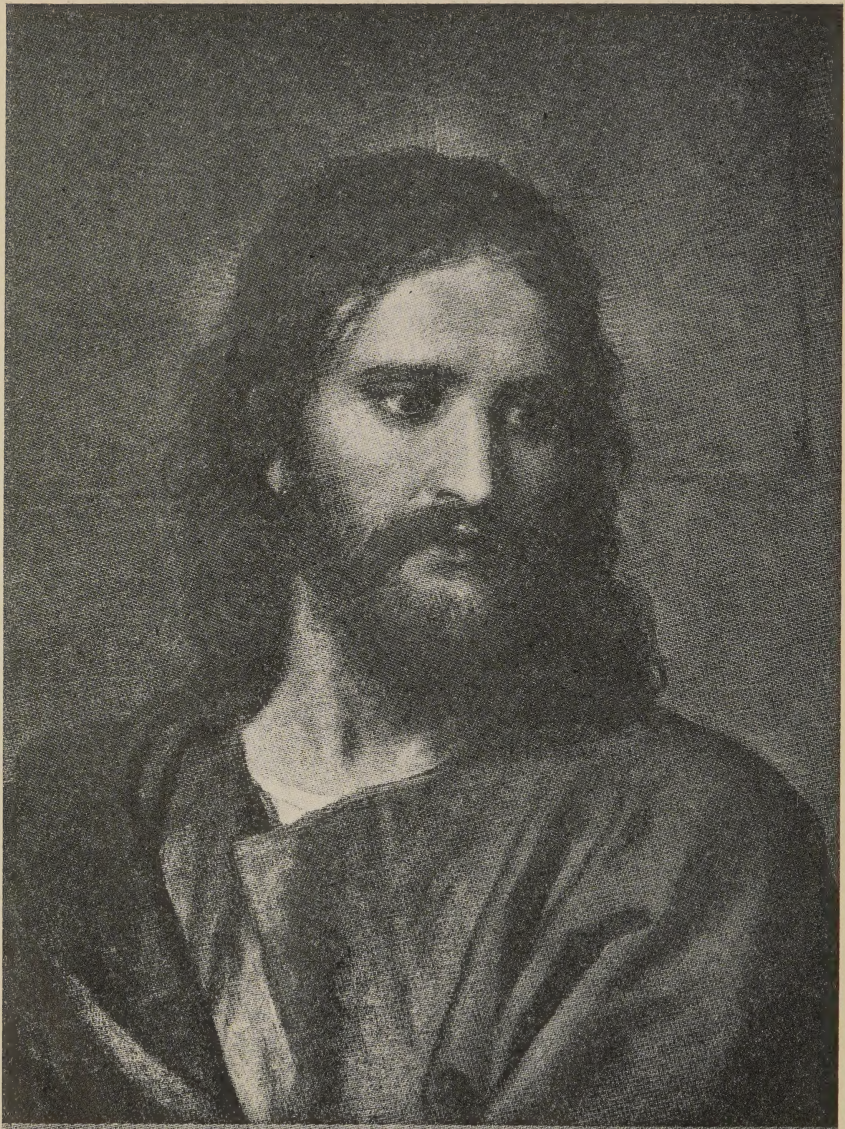

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The Message
Of the
New Testament

By

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Salt Lake City, Utah

Written for the Senior Seminaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under the direction of the Department of Education.

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TO MY MOTHER
SARAH FRAMPTON SMITH

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

"The modern world is asking questions." Especially is this true concerning the life and teachings of the great central figure of Christian thought and feeling, Jesus the Christ.

The material for New Testament study is so presented in this volume as to challenge thought, develop attitude, and inspire conduct in the student that will satisfy both the head and the heart. The lessons are built around problems rising out of incidents recorded in the New Testament, and are treated in the light of contemporary customs and traditions as affected by the political and religious backgrounds of the time in such a way as to make a new and effective appeal to the interests of the young people of the seminaries. I confidently bespeak for this book a hearty welcome everywhere, and feel assured that its hold upon our hearts and interest will grow stronger with the years.

Guy C. Wilson.

PREFACE

"The inability to adapt to a motivating situation constitutes a problem, and the acquisition of a mode of response adapted to that situation is a process of learning." (Carr, H. A.) This is as true in the religious field as it is in any other department of education. "The facing of a problem is the beginning of real thinking." Now thinking is a commendable though not an easy task. The problem situations involved in this text may therefore seem difficult, but in reality they merely challenge the individual to engage in thought. In religion, as elsewhere, we are convinced that happiness in the end need be sought in work. We are encouraged by the thought that, given (a) a situation where thinking is necessary; (b) material to think about; (c) and a motive for thinking, any normal individual will want to respond.

This text is a pioneer in its field. So far as we know, no other attempt has been made to study the message of the New Testament in problem form. First efforts seldom reach perfection. The text does not come to you, however, entirely untried. For eight years the problems and materials have been in the process of consideration. During this time the author, in his classes at the L. D. S. College, has used and tested them. The response of the students has been a source of satisfaction. It is, then, with some degree of assurance that we have now put the material in the form of a text. Our experience is that young people, properly motivated, will with surprising ability and interest attack the seemingly difficult material. Youth loves the adventure of interesting tasks.

The demand for more thorough courses in Bible study has developed. This tendency has encouraged us in our attempt to make the text as serviceable in this respect as possible by quoting profusely from the New Testament.

We have tried in problem form to account for the establishment and forward movement of Christianity during the life of Christ and the early apostolic periods. With this background of scriptural evidence and of interpretive material, we hope the reader will be able the better to form attitudes and conclusions with respect to the message of the New Testament, and particularly with that of Christ, the Lord. If this, happily, may be done, we shall be pleased.

We agree with Morrison that religion is essentially learning in the appreciative field. On the other hand, a rich background of experience furnishes the material upon which to build permanent appreciation. Great teaching skill is here essential. We must not make the mistake of thinking that the assimilative material is the only learning product. On the other hand, neither is emotional enthusiasm the most desirable learning product. It seems to us that both material and emotions must enter, in order to build for proper appreciation. If this be true, then we are dealing with what Morrison calls both the "science type" and the "appreciative type" of teaching. We desire to emphasize this point, for too frequently in the past religious teaching has been dependent quite largely on the emotional product of learning, without the proper broad background of information and experience upon which it should rest.

Now a word concerning the use of the text.

1. The text has been written, as requested, from a Christian point of view without regard to creed.

2. We desire to call the teachers' attention to the thought that problems must not be considered as lessons. They are rather life situations, requiring detailed analysis and adjustments. Consequently, it may take one, two, or three class periods, as the case may be, to finish the consideration of a problem. To preserve unity we thought it best not to divide them up into lessons.

3. There is ample opportunity for the teacher to in-

troduce stories, illustrations, and his own background of information. This he should do to vitalize the class period and motivate the student. The author has purposely left this phase for the instructor.

4. Teachers should not expect the students to work out the problems by themselves in study periods. The best success cannot be attained by assigning the problems for study, to be followed later with a quiz or discussion. The class period should rather be a work period, where all are busy, with the teacher giving proper stimulus and help. We have found that particularly with the younger students it is better for the teacher to work with them. He must make the life situations involved in the problems live again; he must enrich the questions with present-day experiences; he must all the while help with the organization in order to provide the better for proper conclusions and attitudes.

5. The questions at the end of the problems have not been given so much for quiz material as they have for aids to better organization of subject matter. Without this organization proper attitudes cannot be developed, nor can valuable conclusions be drawn. Furthermore, the Assimilative Material has been left in full outline form to aid the teachers and students in the study process.

6. Students should be allowed freedom to form their own conclusions. In order to provide for this, the author has with a great deal of care refrained from drawing summaries or conclusions to the problems. We desire to emphasize here this point, that every student be given opportunity, after the proper organization work has been done, to express his conclusion before the class, or else in writing. If this be rightly done, permanent values may be attained. This may assure their habitual use, the test of the real learning product.

I desire to express my deep appreciation and acknowledgment to the following persons:

1. To Dr. Jos. F. Merrill, under whose general di-

rection the opportunity was granted to do this piece of work.

2. To Guy C. Wilson, as chairman of the Committee, having direct charge of the work. Particularly am I obligated to him for his encouragement of my efforts while he was President of the L. D. S. College.

3. To Newell K. Young, whose criticism and help, coming as they did from his rich background of experience and information, brought valuable contribution to our efforts.

4. To Gertrude P. Smith, whose encouragement and timely suggestions, since the very inception of the work, have been a source of inspiration and help.

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Latter-day Saints College,
August, 1930.

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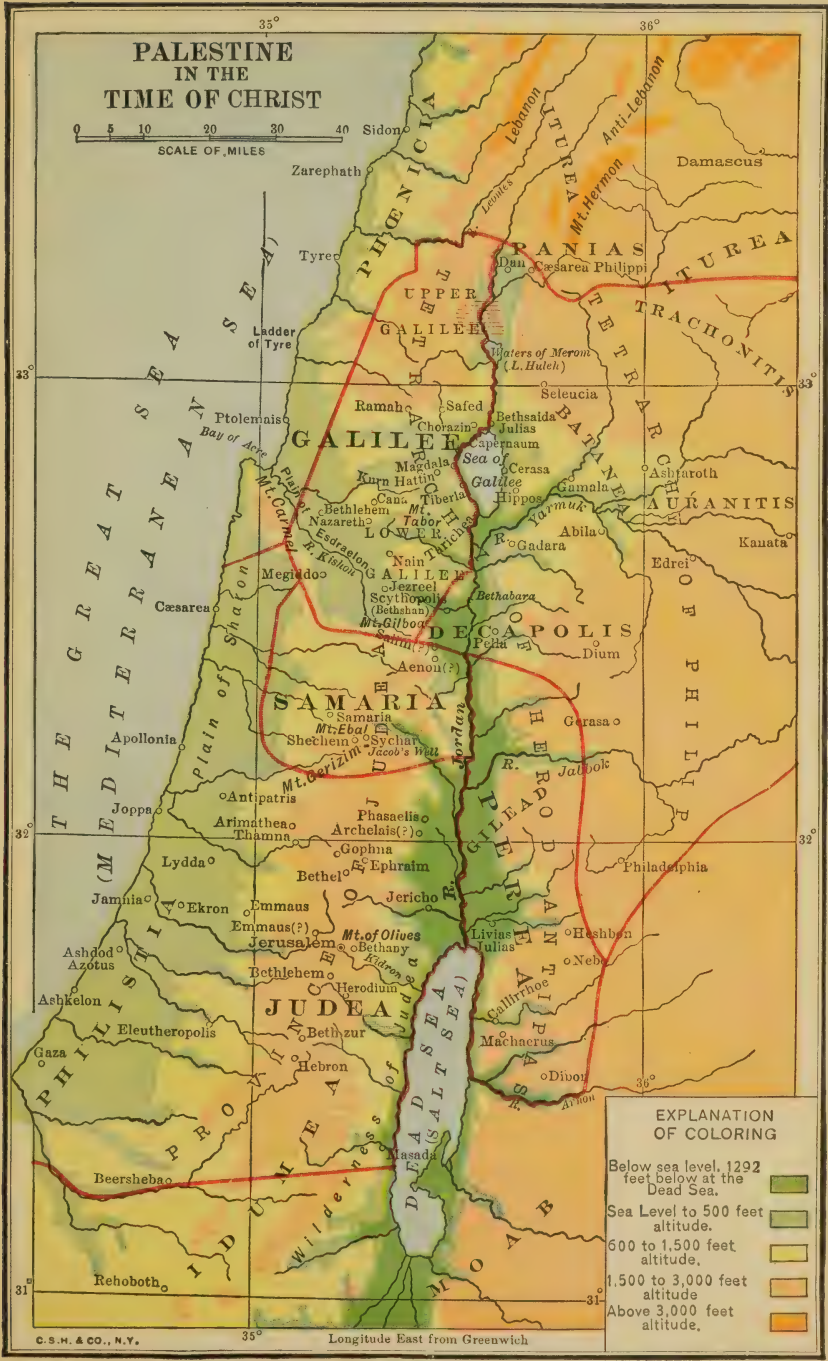
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The Message of the New Testament

PROBLEM 1

THE COMING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 3:1)

On the banks of the Jordan River, near the little town of Bethabara, a multitude had assembled. Slightly elevated above the crowd stood an unique figure clothed in camels' hair and wearing a leather girdle about his loins. He spoke with intense earnestness. Boldly he declared a message of evident importance and interest to the people, for with strained attention they listened to catch every word.

PROBLEM: Who was this man that came out of the desert dressed in a prophet's garb, and whose voice rang out through the silent air: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"?

Bible References: Luke 1:5-25, 57-80.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Jews had suffered much and had waited long for the coming of their king. Some felt that the signs of the times already signified that their Messiah was near at hand. Naturally, therefore, they were willing to give ear to any prophet who claimed to have any encouragement or information. In the midst of the general expectancy and excitement, false prophets came proclaiming various doctrines. For example, one Theudus had recently appeared in Jerusalem. The people listened with some degree of doubt to his message. Thereupon Theudus placed himself to a test. If they would follow him down to the Jordan he would smite the waters of the river, which would separate and let them walk through dry shod as did the waters of the Red Sea under the command of Moses. The multitude followed. The test was made. Theudus failed. Not long after this event, another man appeared with the claim that he was "that prophet." The people asked for a sign. He proffered the sign of Joshua. Again the multitude followed. They marched around the city of Jericho seven times, but the walls stood firm. Thus another man was declared to be a false prophet.

B.–So came false prophet after false prophet. We can well surmise that amongst it all the people became somewhat resigned and critical, and were less easily induced to follow exciting alarms of would-be prophets. So when the bold message of this unique person, who came from the desert and baptized in the Jordan, began to shake the very foundation of Judaism, the most likely questions in the minds of the people, and particularly those now assembled on the banks of the Jordan, were: Who is this man that comes dressed in a prophet's garb? What claim does he make? What sign will he show? And finally, with official sanction, the priests and Levites, sent from Jerusalem, asked: "Who art thou?" (John 1:19)

C.–John's work.

1. To their great surprise John made no claim for himself, but with an assuring manner said: I am "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Luke 3:4) "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose

shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." (Mark 1:7)

D.–The people wondered.

1. With puzzled look the people questioned each other. What does he mean by saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord?" Can it be that he is the forerunner of our King, or is he that King? What is this strange saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?" Is it possible that deliverance is nigh? Thus the multitudes pondered.

E.–The answer to their question, "Who art thou?"

1. "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: (the eighth Course, according to I Chron. 24:10) and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

   "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

   "And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren; and they both were now well stricken in years.

   "And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

   "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." (Luke 1:5-9)

Comment:

Briefly stated, the procedure of the day was as follows: The priest at watch on the highest pinnacle of the temple gave the signal of the approaching dawn. Then the three-fold blast of the trumpeters awakened the city to the day's activities. But still earlier, the priest in charge had summoned to their duties those priests who had made proper preparation in order to become ceremonially clean. The fifty priests on duty separated into two parties and by torchlight inspected the temple courts to make sure that everything was in proper order. When this was done they assembled in the Hall of Hewn and Polished Stone, where "lots" were cast to determine the duty of each priest. In fact, it is said that four different "lots" were cast, two before the temple gates were opened, and two thereafter. The third "lot" of the series determined who was chosen for the highest duty of the day, that of burning incense, which symbolized Israel's accepted prayer. This honor was considered the privilege of a life time; and rarely, if ever, did it fall upon a priest more than once. Zacharias had waited and prayed for many years for such an opportunity. His life's ambition was now realized, for the "lot" fell to him.

The hour was at hand. Sounds of music filled hall and court. It was the call for all priests, Levites, and people to prepare for the incense burning, the chief service of the day. Zacharias, bearing the golden censer, stood ready in the Holy Place. "Red coals glowed on the altar." On the table to his right was the shewbread; to his left stood the golden candlestick which held the lighted candles. Priests and people had all assembled without the walls. Already they were bowed to earth in prayer and worship. Zacharias was alone. He stepped to the altar, reverently kindled the incense, and was about to step back, when "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense." (Luke 1:11. See also Edersheim, Vol. 1, pp. 133-138)

F.–The angel's message.

1. "And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
   "But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." (Luke 1:12, 13)
2. The promise.
   "And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
   "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink;

and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

"And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

"And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:14-17)

G.–Zacharias asked for a sign.

1. "And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." (Luke 1:18)
2. The angel's answer.

   "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

   "And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." (Luke 1:19, 20)

H.–The people waited for Zacharias to appear in order that he might complete his duties. "And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless." (Luke 1:21, 22)

I.–The child born.

1. In due season when the child was born they brought him to be circumcised and to give him a name. Some would have named him Zacharias, after his father, but Elizabeth said his name should be John. Then they asked Zacharias. "And he asked for a writing table, and wrote,

saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." (Luke 1:63, 64)

2. The prophecy of Zacharias.

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

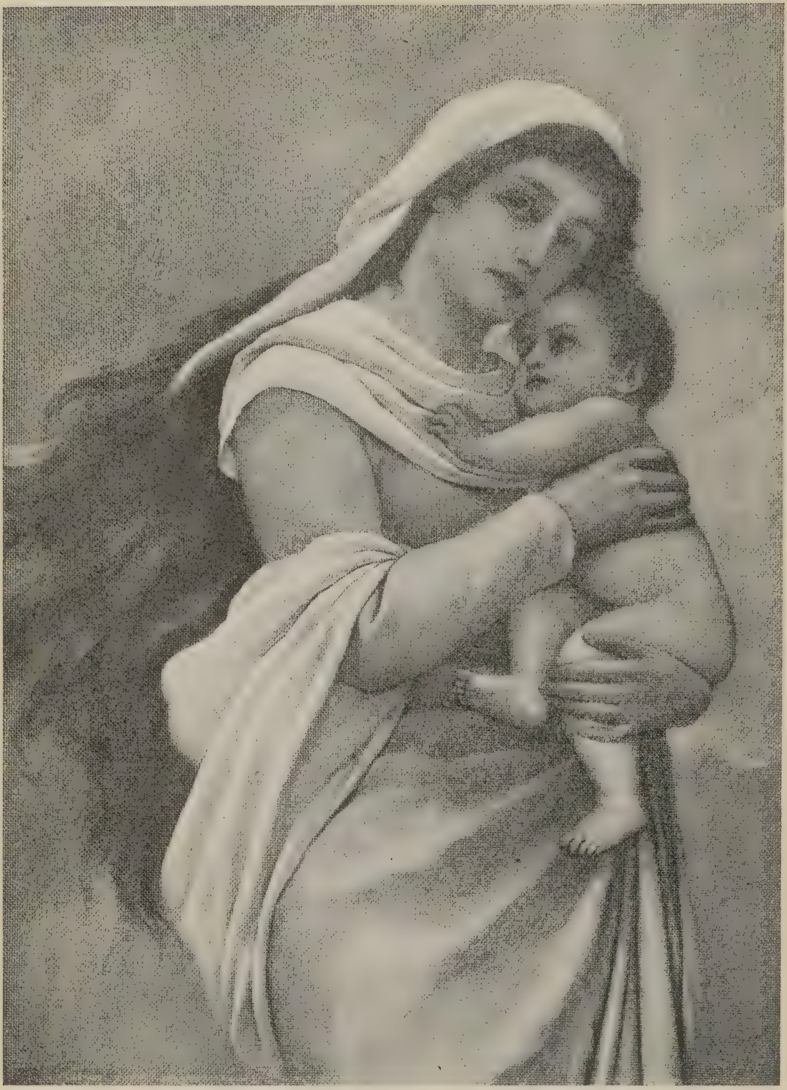
"To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins," etc. (Luke 1:76-79)

J.–"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." (Luke 1:80)

This, then, is the story of the birth of John the Baptist, a man whose coming was announced by the Angel Gabriel, sent of God. It answers the question of the priests and Levites, "Who art thou?" It was John who came dressed in the garb of a prophet and preached repentance, to prepare a people for the coming of their Lord.

II.–Organization of Material.

1. What was Malachi's prophecy concerning the forerunner of Jesus?
2. Give illustrations of the comnig of false prophets.
3. How should prophets prove their claims?
4. What was John's claim?
5. How did his claim affect the people?
6. Who was Zacharias?
7. How was it that he got the right to burn incense?
8. Explain the custom of incense burning.
9. What vision and message came to Zacharias?
10. Did people believe in vision in those days?
11. What happened to Zacharias for his unbelief?
12. What did the people do and think when he tarried?
13. Explain the difficulty of getting the child named.
14. What do the scriptures say about his development?
15. What should be his work?



MOTHER AND CHILD

PROBLEM 2

THE COMING OF CHRIST

PROBLEM: What scriptural evidence concerning the birth of Jesus points to Him as the expected Messiah?

Bible References: Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-40.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The annunciation of Jesus.

1. The Angel Gabriel makes the announcement. (Luke 1:26, 27) "And in the sixth month (that is after he had appeared to Zacharias) the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." (See Isa. 7:14-16)
   a. The angel's message.
      (1) Thou art highly favored.
      (2) Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. (Luke 1:28-31)
      (3) He shall be great. (Luke 1:32, 33)
   b. How shall I know of these things?
      "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)
2. The announcement to Joseph. (Matt. 1:19-23)
   a. "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a

dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (See Isa. 7:14)

b. Joseph was obedient. (Matt. 1:24, 25)

B.–The story of His birth.

1. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." (Luke 2:1)

Comment:

The Roman citizens registered and paid taxes in their resident city; but Caesar had given the Jews the privilege of registering in their ancestral city. Joseph was of the house of David. No doubt Mary was also. Bethlehem was known as the city of David. Thus it was that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be taxed. (Dummelow, p. 741; Edersheim, p. 183)

2. For an account of such a journey to Bethlehem and of the difficulties of securing proper entertainment see: "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," George Adam Smith, pp. 432-435; "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Alfred Edersheim, pp. 180-188, Vol. I.
3. The birth of Jesus.
"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)
4. The shepherds were the first to hear of the great event.

Comment:

These shepherds were not ordinary herders of sheep. They were men developing sheep without blemish for the Temple sacrifices. It no doubt took great care and good management to produce such lambs. These, therefore, must have been devoted Jews, faithful in their work and devout in their religion. (Edersheim, Vol. 1, pp. 186-187)

a. The angel's message.
   (1) "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10, 11) (See Micah 5:2)
   (2) How should the shepherds know? "And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12)

Comment:

Read carefully. There was no star to lead them. It is generally understood that a star appeared to the shepherds. This, you will see, is not so. (Luke 2:15, 16)

   (3) The recognition from Heaven. "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:13, 14)

Comment:

The account from Luke 2:8-14 is such a beautiful bit of literature that it would be well to memorize it.

b. The shepherds visited Bethlehem.
   (1) They found the babe. (Luke 2:16)
   (2) They made known abroad what they had seen. (Luke 2:17, 18)

5. "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19)

C.–Ritualistic requirements.

1. The child was to be named when eight days old. (Luke 2:21)

2. The first-born son, according to the Law, was to be redeemed of the priest at the price of five shekels of the Sanctuary. (Numbers 18:16)
3. Purification sacrifices were to be offered forty-one days after the birth of the male child. This service must be held in the Temple, but it was not necessary for the mother to attend. However, Mary and Joseph went together to the Temple. (Luke 2:22-24. See also Lev. 12; Ex. 13:2; Dummelow, p. 742)

D.–Simeon recognized the babe as the Christ, as also did the prophetess Anna. (Luke 2:25-35, 36-38)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The annunciation.
1. Who announced the coming of Jesus, the Messiah?
2. What was the angel's message?
3. What message was given to Joseph?

B.–The birth.
1. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
2. What privilege did Caesar give to the Jews in respect to registration and to the payment ot taxes which differed from that required of Roman citizens?
3. Give some of the difficulties incident to making the journey to Bethlehem and to securing entertainment there.
4. Where was Christ born?
5. To whom was the annunciation given?
6. What kind of men were these shepherds?
7. Who made the announcement?
8. What was the message?
9. What was the sign for them to seek?
10. Did a star lead them?
11. When they found the child, what did they do?
12. What was Mary's attitude?

13. When was Jesus born? (See Dummelow)

C.–Ritual.

1. What ritualistic requirements had to be performed before the family could return to Nazareth?

D.–Prophecy.

1. What was Simeon's prophecy concerning the babe?

O little town of Bethlehem,
  How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
  The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
  The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
  Are met in thee to-night.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

PROBLEM 3

THE JEWISH MESSIAH AND JESUS

PROBLEM: What was the Jewish concept of the Messiah of Israel and of Jesus?

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The importance of the Messianic hope.

1. The most important of all the preparations for the gospel was the growth of the Messianic expectation, the belief that sometime God would send a Messiah, or Heavenly King, to deliver Israel from their oppressors and to establish on earth the kingdom of God. (See Geo. A. Barton, p. 50) In the Hebrew language the word Messiah means "the anointed One." Our word "Christ" is the Greek translation of it.
2. During the years 740-700 B. C. when Assyria was threatening Judah, Isaiah began to prophesy of the days when God would send a wonderful ruler to establish His kingdom on earth, to rule over His people. Two of his most important prophecies are found in Isaiah 9:2-7 and 11:1-9. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
   "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6, 7)

Comment:

Isaiah's prophecies marked the beginning of the Messianic hope. Many centuries passed, however, and still the King did not come. During these troublesome years Israel had suffered much. They were first conquered by Babylon and carried captive to that city. Then they became subjected to the tyranny of Persia, Macedon, Egypt, Syria, and finally Rome. Naturally the more the stress of the times was felt and the more hopeless relief from ordinary events appeared, the greater grew their hopes that God would send succor through the expected Messiah.

3. The vision of Daniel (Daniel 7) greatly stimulated this hope. Four kingdoms would arise and fall. Finally, in conflict with the last of these, Israel, with the help of God, would crush their foes and set up a kingdom. Under their Messiah they would rule the world, and all nations would pay tribute to them.
4. During the two hundred years just preceding Christ, the expectancy in the coming of their Messiah grew very strong. A mass of literature known as the apocalypses or "revelations" appeared. In order that more weight might be given to these writings, the authors often were wont to put words into the mouths of ancient leaders and thus give what they wished to say as something which God had revealed to these revered men of old.
5. As a type of these writings we quote below a portion of the Psalms of Solomon (Ps. 17, p. 127) which was written about fifty years before Christ.

   "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their King; the son of David, in the time which thou, O God, knowest, that he may reign over Israel, thy servant;

   "And gird him with strength, that he may break in pieces them that rule unjustly.

"Purge Jerusalem from the heathen that trample her down to destroy her, with wisdom and with righteousness. * * *

"He shall destroy the ungodly nations with the word of his mouth so that at his rebuke the nations may flee before him. * * *

"And he shall possess the nations of the heathens to serve him beneath his yoke. * * *

"And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst, for all shall be holy and their King is the Lord Messiah. * * *

"May God hasten his mercy toward Israel! May he deliver us from the abomination of unhallowed adversaries!

"The Lord, he is our King from henceforth and even for evermore." (See Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," pp. 32-34)

6. The leading men of Israel at the time of Christ frowned upon these writings, but the masses of the people who had long been oppressed and who had suffered much under the tyranny of foreign rulers cherished them.
7. The expectancy of His coming was so great that some ventured the prediction of the time when He would come. In the Talmud we find some examples. Some fixed the date at 4,000 years after Adam; others 4,291 years after the creation; still others expected it at the end of the eighty-fifth Jubilee. Later writers "speak of five monarchies—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and Ishmael. During the last of these God would hear the cry of Israel, and the Messiah would come, after a terrible war between Rome and Ishmael." (Edersheim, p. 170)

B.–The personality of the Messiah.

1. General understanding.
   a. "The idea of the Messiah was not something

superimposed upon Israel. Rather it was the basic idea which gave direction to Israel's thought and action. He is the typical Israelite, nay, typical Israel itself. * * * He is the 'Son of God' and the 'Servant of the Lord;' but in the highest and only true sense which had given its meaning to all preparatory development. As He was 'anointed' to be the 'Servant of the Lord,' not with the typical oil but by 'the Spirit of Jehovah' 'upon' Him, so was He also the 'Son' in an unique sense. His organic connection with Israel is marked by the designation, 'Seed of Abraham' and 'Son of David' while at the same time He was essentially what Israel was subordinately and typically, 'Thou art My Son'." (Edersheim, pp. 161-162)

b. This idea that He was of the "Seed of Abraham" and the "Son of David" seems to have been much emphasized by Matthew and Luke; for with great care they worked out the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew indicates altogether forty-two generations from Abraham to Jesus, and Luke gives the genealogy from Joseph back to Adam, who was the son of God. (See Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38)

c. Now a word about the belief of the Synagogue concerning the Messiah. "The idea of the Divine Personality, and of the union of the two Natures in the Messiah, seems to have been foreign to the Jewish auditory of Jesus of Nazareth, and even at first to His disciples. Secondly, they appear to have regarded the Messiah as far above the ordinary human, royal, prophetic, and even Angelic type, to such extent, that the boundary-line separating it from Divine Personality is of the narrowest,

> so that, when the conviction of the reality of the Messianic manifestation in Jesus burst on their minds this boundary-line was easily, almost naturally, overstepped, and those who would have shrunk from framing their belief in such dogmatic form, readily owned and worshipped Him as the Son of God." (Edersheim, Vol. 1, pp. 171-172)

C.–How the modern Jew looks upon Jesus.

1. Coming now to our own time. Ernest R. Trattner in his article "As the Jew sees Jesus," Scribner's Magazine for April, 1930, pages 391 and 392, says the following: "Take for example a fundamental concept as the 'Kingdom of Heaven.' The phrase is common in rabbinical writings. It appears that there were two currents of thought concerning this idea. Some believed that the Kingdom would be a material affair, an actual return to the Judean throne of a scion of the House of David, a rising in splendor of the destroyed Jewish nationality, a complete shake-off from the yoke of Roman oppression. Others again believed that the Kingdom was primarily a spiritual experience utterly untouched by any of the sordid considerations of politics."
2. "The Jew would see Jesus in a Jewish framework, the churches persist in viewing him in terms of ancient creeds. The Jews would understand the Nazarene as a product of Jewish development on Jewish soil, the churches insist that he was the work of the Holy Ghost. It was Heinrich Heine, I believe, who said that it would be forever impossible for Israel to embrace Christianity, for no other reason than the utter im-

possibility of getting one Jew to believe that another Jew was divine."

3. Thus the Jews at the time of Christ and until this day have failed to believe in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Importance of Messianic hope.

1. Of all the preparations for the coming of the gospel which is said to have been the most important?
2. Who first began to prophesy of the coming of the Messiah? When did he prophesy?
3. What condition prevailed to stimulate such hopes?
4. As given in Isaiah 9:6, 7, how would the ruler come, what would be his name, and what would be his duty?
5. During the centuries that followed what foreign powers subjugated Israel?
6. When times were the most hopeless why did the Jewish belief in the coming of the Messiah continue to grow?
7. What was Daniel's vision and how did it stimulate the Messianic hope?
8. What mass of literature appeared during the two hundred years preceding Jesus? What was its message?
9. What did leading men at the time of Christ think of these writings? What did the masses think?
10. What evidence have we that the expectancy in the coming of the Messiah was very great?

B.–The personality of the Messiah.

1. What did the Jews believe about the personality of the Messiah?
2. How does the Jew see Christ today?

C.–Conclusions.

1. What conclusion can you now form regarding the Jewish concept of the Messiah and of Jesus?

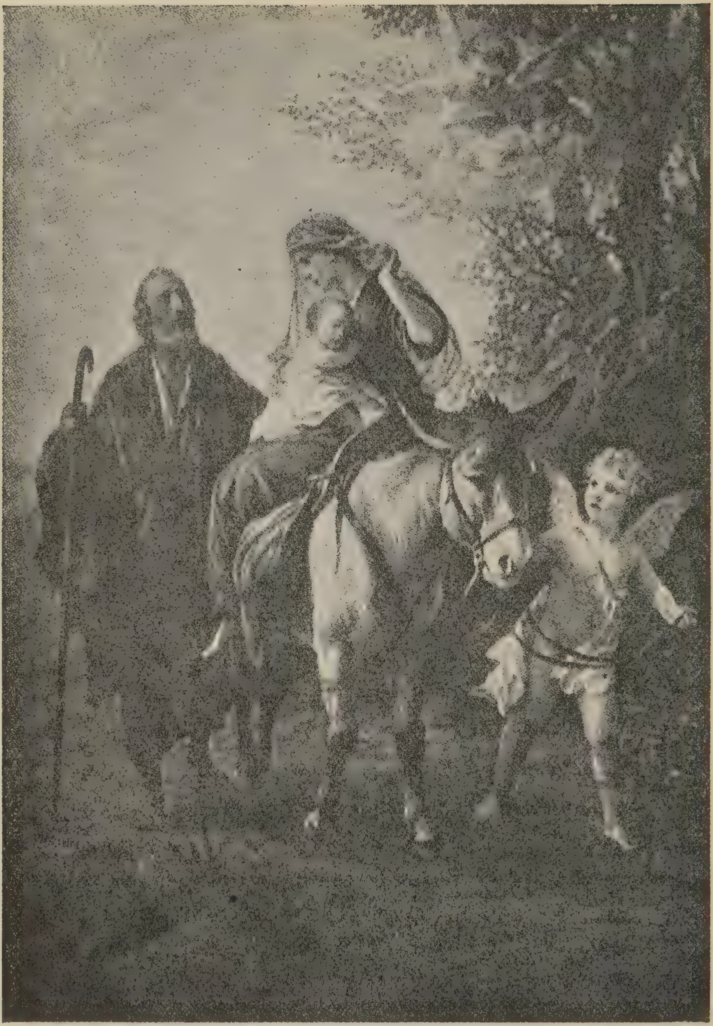
O MOTHER DEAR, JERUSALEM

"F. B. P.", 1583

O mother dear, Jerusalem!
  When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
  Thy joys when shall I see?

O my sweet home, Jerusalem,
  Thy joys when shall I see?
The king that sitteth on my throne
  In His felicity?

Jerusalem, my happy home,
  Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
  Thy joys that I might see!



FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Problem 4

THE LORD PROTECTS THE CHILD JESUS

Problem: Why was an attempt made to destroy the Christ child? How was the scheme frustrated?

Bible Reference: Matt. 2.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The wise men from the east.

1. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east. and are come to worship him." (Matt. 2:1, 2)

Comment:

"The wise men were members of the learned class of the magicians, the repositories of science, philosophy, medical skill and religious mysteries in the countries beyond the Euphrates. Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus tell us that in the regions from whence they came there prevailed an expectation that a great king was about to arise in Judea. The astrologers believed that an unusual phenomenon in the heavens portended a great event on earth, the appearance of a new star, the birth of a king. They were led, therefore, to the west to seek the new ruler." (F. J. Rae, "How to Teach the New Testament," pp. 27-28)

In order to understand the situation which surrounded the child Jesus, it will be necessary to know how jealous and unscrupulous King Herod was. For a brief account of Herod's life see Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," pages 13 and 14.

What is more natural than that these men should have gone to the palace of Herod to make inquiry concerning the new King? Would they not expect the new heir to be born in the king's home?

B.–Herod was troubled.

1. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." (Matt. 2:3)

Comment:

Herod was undoubtedly well acquainted with the fact that the Jews expected their Messiah. Furthermore, he knew that the Scribes, learned in the Law, would know the prophecies concerning the coming of their King. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born." (Matt. 2:4)

Would these Scribes be pleased to answer his question? Is it not strange that the story of the birth of Jesus, as made known to the shepherds, had not reached him?

2. The Scribes' answer. (Matt. 2:5, 6)
   "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet." (See Micah 5:2)
3. Then Herod asked the Magi when the star appeared. (Matt. 2:7)
4. The king sent them to find the child and to return and inform him so he might worship too. (Matt. 2:8) Do you think he was sincere?
5. The star reappeared. It went before them. It stood over where the young child lay. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother." (Matt. 2:11)

Comment:

They found the child (not the babe) and when they came into the house (not the stable or the inn) they worshipped him. It is quite clear that the Magi did not visit Bethlehem on the night of the birth of Jesus. The inference is that it must have been some time later, for they found the young child in a house.

6. They worshipped him.
   a. Their gifts. (See Rae, p. 28)
      (1) Gold, symbolizing a king.

        - (2) Frankincense, for God.
        - (3) Myrrh, for burial.
    - 7. Did they obey Herod's request to return? Why? (Matt. 2:12)
- C.–The life of the babe spared.
    - 1. Joseph warned to flee to Egypt. (Matt. 2:13-15)
    - 2. Herod's proclamation. (Matt. 2:16, 17)
- D.–Joseph's return to Nazareth. (Matt. 2:22, 23)

II.–Organization of Material.

- A.–The wise men.
    - 1. After the birth of Christ who came from the east to find the new King? Why did they think a king was born?
    - 2. Why did they go to Herod to make inquiry?
    - 3. What was their question?
- B.–Herod troubled.
    - 1. What did Herod know about the matter?
    - 2. In order to answer the question of the wise men, what did he do?
    - 3. What answer was given by the Scribes?
    - 4. What question did Herod put to the wise men?
    - 5. What did Herod want the wise men to do when they had found the new-born King? Why?
    - 6. How did they find the child?
    - 7. Was this on the night of His birth?
    - 8. Instead of following Herod's request to return, what did they do?
- C.–The warning.
    - 1. What warning came to Joseph?
    - 2. What did he do?
    - 3. What proclamation did Herod issue?
- D.–Joseph's return.
    - 1. How had the babe's life been spared?

2. Where did Mary and Joseph go to live? Why?

E.–Why was this attempt made to destroy Jesus?

MY MASTERPIECE

Oft to my soul there comes fleeting
  Sweet visions of consummate art;
A statue, a picture, a poem—
  And there awakes somewhat in my heart
A longing to carve the fair image,
  To color the picture sublime,
To sing for the world the sweet poem,
  To create a great masterpiece—mine.

But e'en as I reach for my chisel,
  Or pallette and brush, or my pen,
And open the door to fancy,
  I am brought to the present again.
An echoing laugh may recall me;
  A shrill cry of pain or of fear;
A small grimy hand on my elbow;
  A soft whispered word in my ear.

And away go my visions a-winging
  Back to the fount whence they sprang.
Before me untouched is my marble,
  My canvas is white, my song is unsung.
And I turn to the needs of my baby,
  And, gazing into his dear eyes,
I sense with a sweet sense of wonder
  In his future my masterpiece lies.

—*Elsie C. Carroll.*

PROBLEM 5

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS

We are learning, as the years go by, that childhood days are the golden days for the possibilities in life. Formative influences at this time stimulate and mould the unfolding child and direct its course to future greatness. It is therefore important in the study of any character to know as much about the early life as is possible. The Gospel writers have given us but very little information concerning the early life of Jesus. We have sometimes been content with this, and have undervalued a great deal of the material which is available from other sources. It is very likely that environmental influences of education, of religion, and of custom surrounded the life of Jesus, as in the experience of any other Jewish boy who was reared in a religious home.

PROBLEM: Was the boyhood and youth of Jesus a period of industry and effort, of struggle and hope, of preparation and mastery, of conflict and success? Did He grow in mind and body as we grow?

Bible References:

1. Childhood at Nazareth—Luke 2:39, 40.
2. His life in Nazareth until He was about thirty years of age—Luke 2:51, 52.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus grew and increased in wisdom.

1. Luke 2:40 is of great importance, for it throws considerable light upon our problem.
    a. The child grew.
    b. Waxed strong in spirit.
    c. Filled with wisdom. (Perhaps better ren-

dered by the words, "becoming filled with wisdom")

2. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke 2:52)
    - a. What does increasing in wisdom mean?
    - b. Explain increased "in favour with God."
    - c. How would He increase in favor with man?
3. It is clear, then, that Jesus did not receive at birth full knowledge of Himself and His mission, but that these were gradually unfolded to Him as He struggled and worked and gained experience, or as some translations would have it, as He "cut forward" in life.

B.–Jesus most likely received advantages for study which were required of every Jewish boy.

1. Joseph and Mary were devout people. They naturally gave their son the customary opportunities for development. Might they not have done this with even greater diligence than was the usual custom?
2. Jesus, Himself, was anxious to take advantage of the opportunities offered Him.
    - a. Did He not do so in the Temple when He was twelve years of age?
    - b. His wonderful fund of knowledge, apparent in later life, attested His earlier desire for learning.

C.–Granted that this was the case, what were some of the general educational requirements of every Jewish boy?

1. Two general aims in Jewish education.
    - a. Religious instruction.
    - b. The learning of a trade.
2. Educational requirements in the study of religion.
    - a. Duties of the mother and the father.

"It was, indeed, no idle boast that the Jews

~~95976~~ 95976

'were from their swaddling clothes * * * trained to recognize God as their Father, and as the Maker of the world;' that, 'having been taught the knowledge (of the laws) from earliest youth, they bore in their souls the image of the commandments'; * * * that they were 'brought up in learning', 'exercised in the Law', and made acquainted with the acts of their predecessors in order to (secure) their imitation of them." (Edersheim, Vol. 1, p. 230)

b. Possibly the mother was the first teacher, but it was also the bounden duty of the father to teach his son.

c. At five or six years of age every boy was to begin school at the Synagogue. Here, until he was ten years of age, he studied important parts of the Pentateuch, and also certain Psalms, especially the Hallel-Psalms (Psalms 113-118) Christ's later life showed how well he learned the written law. At ten years of age boys began the study of the Oral Law, which was known as the Mishnah. (See Edersheim, Vol. 1, pp. 228-233) Christ, you will remember, expressed himself as being very much displeased, during His ministry, with the way the Pharisees had made the Oral Law virtually to nullify portions of the written Law.

D.–Development through experience.

1. The probable home conditions of Jesus.

a. "Probably the houses in Nazareth were of stone. The houses of the poor had but one room, and it is doubtful if that of the carpenter of Nazareth contained more." (Barton, p. 74)

b. The furniture of the house was of the simplest sort—a few earthenware dishes and water-jars, a few stone dishes, a mill for grinding cereals, an oven, some rugs or mats which served as beds, a lampstand, and a low stool or flat stone which served as a table." (Barton, p. 75)

- c. "As night came on the little clay lamp, filled with olive oil, was brought out, lighted, and put on the lampstand (Matt. 5:15) * * * Later the table and oven were put aside and the mats or rugs which served as beds were brought out and unrolled on the floor. Skins were spread over these and the family lay down to sleep." (Barton, p. 77)

2. Jesus at play.
   - a. No small part of one's education comes from commingling with one's fellows.
     - (1) Do you think Jesus played?
     - (2) What games did the children play then?
     - (3) Could we think of Jesus playing unfair?
     - (4) Children played dancing. (Matt. 11:16, 17)
3. After returning from the Passover Feast, when he became a son of the law and an adult member of the congregation, Jesus, no doubt, entered more and more largely into the work of the carpenter.
   - a. "The statement of Mark 6:3, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?' indicates that Joseph was dead; for it was the custom in Palestine to call men sons of their mother only after the father had been dead some time." (Barton, p. 103)
   - b. "For some years, then, Jesus was an artisan; he belonged to the great army of the world's hand-workers. This links him in sympathy to all working people." (Barton, p. 104)
   - c. Wages were low and taxes were high. He

must have worked bravely and faithfully to help support His mother and the large family of five brothers and at least two sisters. (See Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55-56)

4. Since one of the divisions of the main highway passed through Nazareth, Jesus must have come in contact with the traveler, and learned of other peoples and their ways. The spring in the eastern part of the town was probably a camping place for such.
5. His skillful use of parables attested His keen powers of observation and thoughtful understanding of things and of life and its problems as a youth.
6. Thus, from His home, His associates, school, extra studies, and environment in general, He learned much. The marvel of His learning is the fact that He was able to convert it into such keen judgment and wisdom. St. Luke confirms this idea when he says that Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature—a statement which implies growth in mind and in body, a process quite like our own growth.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus grew and increased in wisdom.

1. What does Luke 2:40 say about the development of Jesus?
2. What did men and God think of Him?
3. Did Jesus have full knowledge in the beginning?

B.–Home attitude about His well-being.

1. What was the most likely attitude of Joseph and Mary concerning Jesus' development?
2. What was probably His attitude?

C.–Opportunities for progress.

1. What were the general aims of Jewish education?

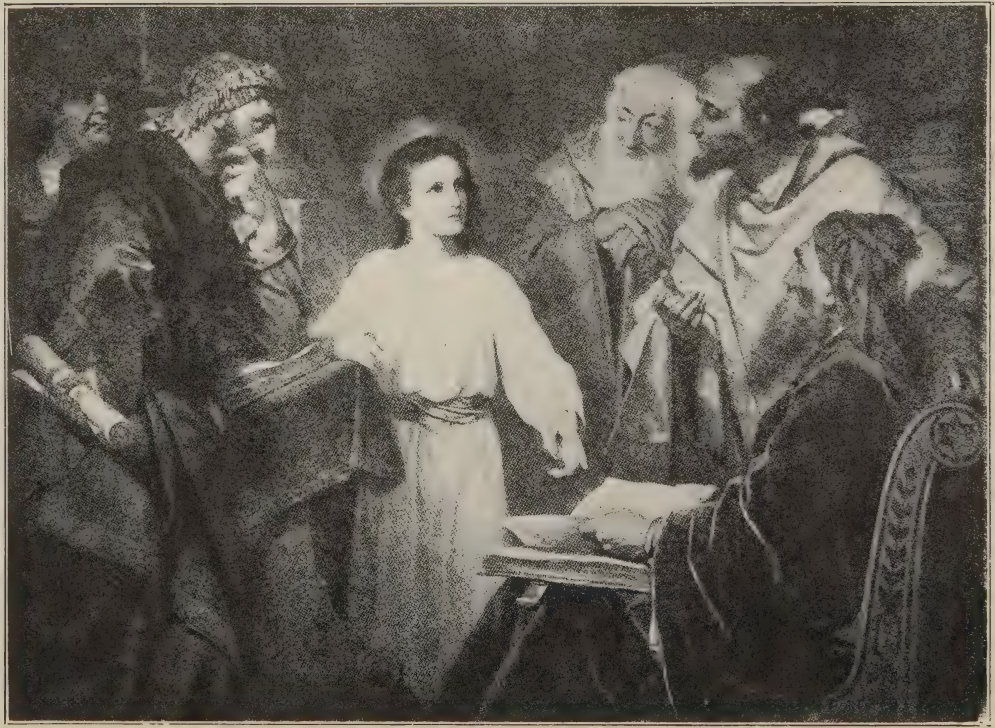
2. What was the general Jewish attitude with respect to religious education?
3. What was the duty of mother and father in helping to educate their son?
4. What was the duty of the Synagogue?
5. What did Christ likely study in the Synagogue?

D.–Development through experience.

1. Describe a home and home life in Nazareth.
2. Do you think that as a boy Jesus played? If so, what would He learn through play?
3. When Jesus became a young man, what work did He follow?
4. What influence would His work have upon His life?
5. What might Jesus have learned from the travelers who passed through Nazareth?
6. What things indicate His keen power of observation?
7. How did the learning which Jesus secured differ from that of others?

E.–General.

1. Which of the following statements do you like best? Why?
    a. Jesus, being divine, did not need to study and work hard in order to grow in wisdom.
    b. Jesus, the Messiah, had to work diligently and thoughtfully in order to gain knowledge and wisdom.
2. Account for Christ's ability to quote and use scripture when the need for it arose.
3. What is your conclusion concerning the opportunities Jesus had for study? How did He use these advantages?



CHRIST AND THE DOCTORS

PROBLEM 6

THE BOYHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS
(*Continued*)

PROBLEM: What is significant about the visit of Jesus to the Temple when He was twelve years of age?

Bible Reference: Luke 2:41-50.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–General requirements of attendance at religious feasts.

1. The Old Testament law required every male to attend three feasts a year at a place which the Lord would choose. (Deut. 16:16)
2. Later the law was changed, so that only those who lived within fifteen miles of Jerusalem were required to be present. (Edersheim, "The Temple," p. 183)
3. At the time of Christ, Hillel, one of the great teachers in the Temple, instructed the people to the effect that women ought to attend at least one feast each year, preferably the Feast of the Passover. (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 236)

B.–Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Feast of the Passover.

1. Note the custom of the family with respect to attending this feast each year. (Luke 2:41)
2. When Jesus was twelve *He went* to the Feast with His parents. (Luke 2:42)
3. Account for the importance given to this event in His life.
    a. From twelve to thirteen years of age every Jewish boy was expected to become a "Son of the Law."
    b. This meant that at this time the boy became a member of the congregation.
    c. Thereafter he was an adult.

d. Henceforth he had new responsibilities and rights.

(1) To illustrate, the father could no longer consider him, if he so inclined, as so much chattel to be sold if necessity required.

e. This day was, therefore, an important event in the life of any boy, particularly of Jesus.

(1) This probably may have been His first visit to the Temple since he was a babe.

(2) If so, we can well imagine what joy and reverence filled His soul when He entered the House of the Lord.

f. The services of the day might have been even more important than the confirmation ceremonies held today in our modern churches. To the boys it is quite likely that the exercises were of even greater importance than are our present commencement programs held at the time of graduation.

g. The nature of the occasion brought Jesus into the presence of the great teachers in the Temple.

C.–Return homeward.

1. After the necessary time required at the feast, Joseph and Mary, in connection with their "company," began their homeward journey; but Jesus tarried in Jerusalem.

a. After a day's journey, they returned seeking Him. (Luke 2:44-45)

Comment:

Personal attendance in the Temple was required during the first two days of the feast. With the third day commenced half-holidays. It was then lawful for people to return home if they so desired. It seems that Joseph and Mary took advantage of this custom and left the feast early. Opportunity was afforded on the third, the fourth and the fifth days of the feast for people to hear lectures given by the great teachers and to ask them questions. At this time it was customary for the doctors to come out on the terrace of the Temple to teach. They permitted free discussion and actually invited the people to present questions. Jesus was here taking advantage of this opportunity when His parents found Him. (See Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 246-247)

b. They found Him in the Temple. (Luke 2:46)

c. What was He doing? (See Luke 2:46, 47)

Comment:

It is a mistake to believe that Jesus was in debate with these men or even preaching to them. This would have been unbecoming to a boy such as Jesus. May not a better idea be that because of Jesus' thoughtful and far-sighted questions and answers the great teachers marveled and were astonished at His learning? Thus they would be pleased with Him; for a boy with such ability had a promising future and needed to be encouraged.

D.–The first recorded words of Jesus.

1. "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)

Comment:

There is now some doubt about the best translation of ev tols tov ttatpos rov. Edersheim, in "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," page 249, states the following: "This expression may be equally rendered, or rather supplemented by 'in my Father's house' and 'about my Father's business.' The former is adopted by most modern commentators." The translation, "wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house," agrees better with Luke 2:51. Furthermore, it does not raise the question at this time of His knowing His full mission and then neglecting it for eighteen years.

2. What, then, is the significance of His answer?

a. When left alone He sought the great religious teachers in the Temple, instead of choosing less important interests and pleasures.

(1) Does this help us to understand Him better?

      (2) Would you choose to spend your leisure time in a great city in this manner?
    3. They did not understand what He meant. (See Luke 2:50)
  E.–"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." (See Luke 2:51)

II.–Organization of Material.
  A.–General feast attendance.
    1. What was required of all males with respect to attendance at feasts?
    2. In what way was the law later changed?
    3. What was Hillel's teaching concerning the attendance of women?
  B.–Jesus at the feast.
    1. What was the custom of the family concerning attendance at the Passover?
    2. Account for the importance given to His attendance when He was twelve years of age.
    3. Explain how it was that Jesus would come into the presence of the great teachers at this time.
  C.–Return.
    1. Why did Joseph and Mary return home before the feast had ended?
    2. When they lost Jesus, where and how long did they seek for Him?
    3. Where did they find Him?
    4. What was He doing?
    5. How was it that such a privilege was open to Him?
  D.–His first recorded words.
    1. What was His answer to His parents' question?
    2. Which translation do you like best, and why?
      a. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
      b. "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"

3. In what way does the latter agree better with the idea in Luke 2:51? What is the idea of modern commentators?
4. If you like the second translation, what is the significance of His answer?

E.–Subject to His parents.

1. If Jesus was to be about His Father's business, account for His neglecting it for eighteen years, while He was obedient to His parents at Nazareth?

F.–What is your conclusion about the significance of this visit to the Passover Feast?

JESUS THE CARPENTER

If I could hold within my hand
The hammer Jesus swung,
Not all the gold in all the land,
Nor jewels countless as the sand,
All in the balance flung,
Could weigh the value of that thing
Round which his fingers once did cling.

If I could have the table he
Once made in Nazareth,
Not all the pearls in all the sea,
Nor crowns of kings, or kings to be,
As long as men have breath
Could buy that thing of wood he made—
The Lord of Lords who learned a trade.

Yes, but his hammer still is shown
By honest hands that toil,
And round his table men sit down,
And all are equals, with a crown
No gold nor pearls can soil.
The shop at Nazareth was bare,
But Brotherhood was builded there.

—*Charles M. Sheldon.*

Problem 7

THE SPRINGTIME OF A NEW ERA

"In his character and teachings John closely resembled the early Hebrew prophets. The content of his message was in many respects similar to that of Amos. Like the princely Isaiah, he stepped out of his class. Like Jeremiah, he sacrificed all personal interest to the realization of his God-given mission. * * * His habit and costume, as well as his boldness, reminded the people of the prophet Elijah." (Kent, "Life and Teachings of Jesus," p. 58)

"His was not a call to armed resistance, but to repentance, such as all knew and felt must precede the Kingdom. The hope which he held out was not of earthly possessions, but of purity. There was nothing negative or controversial in what he spoke; nothing to excite prejudice or passion, * * * not ambitious nor self-seeking, but most humble in his self-estimate, discarding all claim but that of lowliest service, and pointing away from himself to Him who was to come, and whom as yet he did not even know. * * * His one absorbing thought: The Kingdom was at hand, the King was coming—let them prepare." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 277)

The Jewish writer, Josephus, bears strong testimony to the character of the man and the impression that he made upon his race. "He was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as justice toward one another and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism; for baptism would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it; not in order to expiate sin, but for purification of the body, provided that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness." (Ant. XVIII, 5:2. See also Kent, p. 62)

Problem: When the news of John and his message rang throughout Palestine and challenged Rabbis and people alike, multitudes flocked to John with the common problem: What shall we do?

Bible References: Mark 1:1-8; Matt. 3:1-12; Luke 3:1-18.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The need for John's work.

1. Morality was on the decline. (See Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 255-273)
2. Spiritual vitality among the Jews was being largely replaced by formalism. The letter of the Law was strangling the Spirit that gives life.
   a. "Israel had made void the Law by its traditions. Under the load of outward ordinances and observances its spirit had been crushed. The religion as well as the grand hope of the Old Testament had become externalized." (Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 93-108)
   b. Note the custom of Corban. (Mark 7:9-13)
   c. The tradition of the elders with respect to washing of cups, etc. (Mark 7:3-8)

B.–General aspects of John's message.

1. His coming fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi. (3:1)
2. The burden of his message was: Prepare for the coming of the Lord and the Kingdom of God. This meant—
   a. "A public confession of guilt and renunciation of past sins."
   b. "A prayer for divine forgiveness and for consecration to a purer life."
   c. "A preparation for God's coming rule in the life of the individual and the nation." (See Kent's "Life and Teachings of Jesus," p. 61)
3. A promise that another more worthy than he

would soon come to baptize them with fire and the Holy Ghost. (See Matt. 3:11)

C.–John's more specific instructions.

1. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him he challenged their preparation.
    - a. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
      "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. 3:7, 8)
    - b. "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. 3:9)

Comment:

"Did the Pharisees imagine that, according to the common notion of the time, the vials of wrath were to be poured out only on the Gentiles, while they, as Abraham's children, were sure of escape—in the words of the Talmud, that 'the night' (Is. 21:12) was 'only to the nations of the world, but the morning to Israel'? * * * The merits of the 'Fathers' is one of the commonest phrases in the mouths of the Rabbis. * * * In fact, by their descent from Abraham, all the children of Israel were nobles, infinitely higher than any proselytes." (Edersheim, Vol. 1, p. 271) Wherein lay the dangers of this self-assurance of the Pharisees?

- c. His warning of the judgment.
  "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matt. 3:10)
    - (1) What does this mean as applied to the Pharisees and Sadducees?

2. Upon another occasion the people came, asking: "What shall we do?"
    - a. He answered, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." (Luke 3:11)

(1) What did John mean?

(2) What condition must have prevailed if this was the kind of repentance required?

3. Even the publicans discontinued their oppressions for a while and came to John with the question: "Master, what shall we do?" (Luke 3:12)

"And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you." (Luke 3:13)

Comment:

In order to understand the better John's searching answer, a study of the Roman taxation system as applied to Palestine would be enlightening. "The Publicans whom we read of in the New Testament were not a sect, but a class of the Jewish people * * * odious to the rest of the community as collectors of taxes imposed upon the nation mostly at the instance of their foreign oppressors, the Romans. The revenues of the district were the property of some rich Roman citizen or body of citizens who stipulated to pay a certain sum into the Roman treasury for the right of collecting them, and who had agents in the province to employ natives to make the actual collections. * * * These collectors paid the agent so much for the right of collecting it, and made as much more as they could by extortion at the hands of the people. * * * It was a nefarious system, and a source of oppression most galling." (Baxter's "Comprehensive Teachers' Bible Helps," p. 92)

4. A fourth class, the soldiers, came with the identical question: "And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:14)

a. What sin did they need to repent of?

Comment:

The above four classes represented powerful social groups: the church, the people, the tax collectors, and the army.

D.–The vitality of John's message.

1. It is clear that John expected a modified life.
    - a. Repentance.
    - b. Adjustment to the approaching new kingdom.
    - c. Loyalty to the kingdom.
2. This required adjustments of life habits both of thought and deed.
3. Great numbers, therefore, would not be able to make the proper adjustment. Christ indicated this when He likened the Kingdom of God unto a little leaven, which would finally leaven the whole mass.
4. Repentance, with its accompanying adjustments, marks the growing period of moral life. Such growth takes time. It is filled with heart throbs.
5. Thus John came at an opportune time to cry repentance, a preparation for the coming of the Lord.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The need of John's work.

1. What Bible characters did John resemble? How?
2. What was to be the spirit of John's mission?
3. What testimony was given of the character of John?
4. What was the condition of morals then?
5. What problem existed between the spirit of religion and the Law?
6. Cite some customs to show this.

B.–General aspects of John's work.

1. What was Malachi's prophecy?
2. Name the three important phases which marked the burden of his message.
3. What was his promise?

C.–His specific teachings.

1. What did he tell the Pharisees?

2. What was the current belief concerning the Jews' relation to Abraham?
3. Why was this dangerous?
4. What was John's warning to them?
5. What were the people required to do?
6. When the publicans came, what did he require of them? Why?
7. What did he tell the soldiers to do?
8. What social groups were there represented?

D.–Vitality of John's message.

1. What did John expect of people who became his disciples?
2. What adjustments were necessary for a person to comply with John's request?
3. Would great numbers be able to comply?
4. Was this a good time for John to come?

E.–What is your conclusion and attitude concerning John and his work?

THE JOB

Whether the job be large or small,
  Splendid or poorly paid;
Whether you're ruled by task or gong,
  Boss of the job or clerk;
Whether you labor with joy or await
  Clang of the quitting bell;
If the work's worth doing—at all worth doing—
  It's worth doing well!

Whether the job be large or small,
  If it's the task for you,
Get in your stride, or quit it all,
  Struggle and strive to do!
Honest! Be square! Be not slip-shod or slick!
  Urgings to idle quell!
For a job worth while—at all worth doing—
  Is worth doing well!

—*Edmund Leamy.*

PROBLEM 8

JOHN'S SYMBOL

At the time of Christ the lives of the Jews were regulated largely by custom and ritual. They had elaborate regulations against pollution and defilement. As for example, a Jew would be defiled if he entered during a feast day a Gentile's home wherein leavened bread was kept. He would be defiled if he ate without washing, not only the hands, but the cups as well. For purification, washings and ceremonial baths were with great diligence prescribed. As often as defilement occurred these washings and baths had to be observed. Now John adopted a method, the application of which was quite different from anything known to the Jew.

PROBLEM: What method did John adopt? What was unique in the application of his symbol and method?

Bible References: Matt. 3:5, 6; Mark 1:4, 5.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Jewish custom.

1. Washing was required to remove various types of pollution.
   - a. Exodus 19:10; Lev. 15:5-8, 10-12, 27; 17:16.
   - b. The Jewish Law required "that those who had contracted Levitical defilement were to immerse before offering sacrifice." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 273)
   - c. "Again, it was prescribed that such Gentiles as became 'proselytes of righteousness,' or 'proselytes of the Covenant,' were to be admitted to full participation in the privilege of Israel by the threefold rites of circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice—the immersion being,

as it were, the acknowledgment and symbolic removal of moral defilement, corresponding to that of Levitical uncleanness." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 273)

B.–John's symbol.

1. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

   "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark 1:4, 5)

Comment:

"John made baptism the chief symbol in his work, not because of its ceremonial associations, but because it was the universally recognized symbol of cleansing from filth." (Kent, "Life and Teachings of Jesus," p. 61)

2. Method of baptism used by John and the early Christians.
   a. "Immersion of the entire man was doubtless the type of baptism which John employed, for it was adapted to his spirit and purpose." (Kent, p. 61)

C.–The early Christian symbol.

1. The word baptism is derived from the Greek word *bapto*, to immerse. Modern Greeks understand baptism to mean burial in water. "From their first embracing of Christianity to this day they (Greeks) have always baptized and do yet baptize by immersion." (Robinson)
2. Strabo, who lived at the time of Christ, referred to certain saline waters and used the term "baptise" with the following meaning: "These (waters) have the taste of salt water, but a different nature, for even persons who cannot swim are not liable to be baptized in them, but float like logs on the surface."

3. Turtullian, one of the early Christians, referred to baptism in the following manner: "There is no difference whether one is washed in a sea or in a pool, in a river or in a fountain, in a lake or in a channel: nor is there any difference between those whom John dipped in Jordan, and those Peter dipped in the Tiber. * * * We are all immersed in the water."
4. Justin Martyr, another of the early Christians, said: "After that, they are led by us to where there is water, and are born again in the kind of new birth by which we ourselves were born again. For upon the name of God, the Father * * * and of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and of the Holy Ghost, the immersion in water is performed because Christ hath also said, Except a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."
5. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
    a. Whether or not John understood that his method of baptism symbolized the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, we do not know. But Paul certainly understood it as such when he wrote to the Romans: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefor we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3, 4)

D.–Further consideration of John's method.

1. It involved not only the acceptance of his symbol, but a preparation for the Kingdom of God which would soon be established.
    a. It called for a new life. Preparation meant

not only physical acceptance but a real purification of mind and habits so that a person might dwell in the Kingdom and consecrate his life thereto. The baptism was only the external symbol. Inner purification of heart and soul was necessary in order to obtain from God forgiveness of sins. His symbol was mere chaff unless preceded by true repentance.

b. John's method differed from the current custom of the Jews in that his call to repentance was for the Jew as well as the Gentile. He was no respecter of person or creed. All must prepare for the coming of the Messiah. The fact that they were children of Abraham did not matter. Again, John preached an ethical creed. On the other hand, the Rabbis emphasized purification through ritual and ceremonies, through the observance of the Law. We can well surmise the difficulty which faced his disciples when they actually strove to purge from mind and body old customs, habits, and motives learned from the Rabbis, and adapt themselves to a new life. They faced a problem which only strong men with faith in a great cause could successfully solve. We are not sure that a great many did. Some, however, were able to adjust and finally became faithful disciples of Jesus.

E.–John could do only the minor part of the work.

1. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh * * * he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke 3:16)

Comment:

It is plain that John's baptism in and of itself was not complete. He indeed called people to true repentance, but it remained for Christ to bring the Spirit and to teach the people the way of life. Thus it was that John's work stood as a link between the Jewish tradition and the future Kingdom. It was a challenge for men to cut themselves loose from the past and reconstruct a new era.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jewish custom.

1. What was the Jewish custom of cleansing, both for Jew and Gentile proselyte?

B.–John's symbol.

1. What was evidently John's method of baptism?
2. What is the derivation of the word baptism?

C.–Early Christian symbol.

1. How did the ancient Greeks baptize? How do they baptize now?
2. In what way did Strabo use the word baptize?
3. Give Turtullian's statement of the procedure in his day.
4. What was Justin Martyr's teaching of baptism?
5. What was Apostle Paul's idea of baptism?

D.–Further consideration.

1. What did the acceptance of John's baptism involve?
2. How did his procedure with baptism differ from that current among the Jews? How was it unique?

E.–John's was the minor part.

1. To complete John's baptism what was necessary?
2. Who must do this?

F.–What is your conclusion with respect to the form and method of John's baptism?

G.–Discuss repentance as a principle of moral growth.

PROBLEM 9

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

PROBLEM: What is the significance of the Baptism of Jesus?

Bible References: Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Multitudes continued coming to John to learn of his message.

1. The Pharisees, the soldiers, the publicans, and the peopel generally—all had visited the Jordan. Many had become disciples of John, and were baptized.
2. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. 3:13, 14)

Comment:

We have no evidence that John knew at this time that Jesus was the Christ. In fact, in John 1:33 the Baptist said, "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

In the light of the above statement, how may we explain John's words given in Matt. 3:13, 14? Some authors, as for example, Burton and Mathews, in their "Life of Christ" (p. 57), suggest that he may or he may not have known Jesus. On the other hand, Albert Edersheim, in "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. 1, page 278, says, "there seems not to have been any personal acquaintance between Jesus and John." In the absence of definite knowledge may we not with some degree of assurance agree with Edersheim when he says "each must have heard and known of the other?"

3. Christ answered John.

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him." (Matt. 3:15)

Comment:

Thus Jesus approved and accepted John's baptism. How could He have done otherwise, and still have honored John as His forerunner?

Toward the close of His ministry He put a question to the priests and elders, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Matt. 21:25) His answer to Himself three years before must have been that it was of God.

The spirit of the work of John was not only a call for preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of God, but it was, in a deeper sense, a call for a new life, a *consecration* of one's life to and for the Kingdom. In this sense it was necessary for Jesus to accept baptism "to fulfill all righteousness."

4. Christ was baptized.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:16, 17. See also Luke 3:22)

Comment:

If the reason for His baptism was not clear beforehand, it certainly was after His baptism; for two things had happened to Jesus:

a. *He had come to a full realization that He was the Son of God.*
b. *He was endowed with the power of the Spirit from on high.* (See Rae, "How to Teach the New Testament," p. 41)

When speaking to Nicodemus, Christ said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) He evidently spoke from experience. If ever a person was born into a new life it was Jesus. Before His baptism He was a private citizen. Afterwards He knew He was the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Henceforth He must be identified with humanity and its problems. His powers were great, His duties and responsibilities tremendous. Thus it appears that it was necessary for even Jesus to be baptized.

There was a further change in the life of Jesus. After the knowledge of His Sonship came to Him and after He was endowed with power from on high, He had to adjust His life in accordance with the purpose of His new vision. May it not have been this problem of adjustment which drove Him into the wilderness for fasting and prayer?

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus came to accept John's baptism.

1. What evidence, if any, have we that John at this time knew Jesus was the looked-for Messiah?
2. When John questioned the matter of His baptism, what was Christ's answer?
3. In what sense was it necessary for Jesus to accept John's baptism?
4. What two significant things happened when Christ was baptized?
5. What did this mean to Him?
6. Did Jesus have a new birth? In what way?
7. What change came into the life of Jesus through the knowledge He gained?
8. What problems then faced Him?
9. What is your conclusion as to the significance of the baptism of Jesus? Give reasons.

To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way.
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,
And in between on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go. —*John Oxenham.*

PROBLEM 10

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

PROBLEM: What is the meaning and the significance of the temptation of Jesus?

Bible References: Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13; John 6:15; Matthew 16:21, 21-23; John 7:3-5; Matt. 26:36-45.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.
  A.–What does it mean to be tempted?
    1. A behavior situation is present.
      a. It may be in thought or in actuality.
      b. It involves a motivating stimulus that persists until proper adjustments are made.
      c. There must be present the possibility for alternative modes of action.
      d. There must be a desire for the object of temptation.
      e. One faces the problem of deciding on this or that course of action.
    2. Study a situation in which you were tempted, and see how you felt and acted.
  B.–Christ's temptation.
    1. Setting.
      a. Just before the temptation Christ had been baptized.
      b. At that time God had declared from the heavens: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
      c. Furthermore, the Holy Ghost had descended upon Him.
      d. These experiences had brought Him to the full consciousness of His Messiahship.
      e. Conscious of who He was, His thoughts would

most likely turn to a contemplation of what it all meant. No doubt thoughts like the following would pass through His mind: It is true, I am the Son of God. I am the long-looked-for Messiah. Great powers belong to me. How shall I use them? How shall I proceed to do the work as Savior of mankind? What is the nature of the Kingdom of God? Father, help me to understand!

  f. Thus, confronted with the greatest problem ever presented to man, and sensing the full weight of His duty and responsibility and knowing His dependence upon His Father in Heaven, He was actually driven into the wilderness for meditation, fasting, and prayer.

2. Comment.
  a. The records indicate that Christ struggled with His problem for forty days. There can be no doubt but that He knew the current belief concerning the Messiah and was aware of the expectation of the Jews.
    (1) Explain the Jewish idea of the Messiah and His mission. (This was given in the lesson on the Jewish concept of the Messiah.)
  b. During these forty days it became very clear to Christ that the current idea of the Messiah, as a Julius Caesar, was wrong. The Messiah, in order to become the Savior of mankind and bring to pass the eternal life of man, had to proceed in another way. (See Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 60)
    (1) He must found the Kingdom of God among men.
    (2) People must be taught how to gain membership in that kingdom.
    (3) He must teach them how to live therein.

        (4) His life must be an example before them.
        (5) He must sacrifice for the good of all.
    c. There was, consequently, a behavior situation facing Him. He had to decide between two methods of procedure: one tinkled with gold and silver, houses and lands, pomp and armies; the other would bring Him to the homes of the poor, the needy and the sick, to persecution and to Calvary.
3. His Temptations.
    a. Should He use His power as the Son of God for self-benefit? (See Matt. 4:2, 3)
    b. His answer. (Matt. 4:4. See also Deut. 8:3)
    c. Should He use His power in order to show Himself before men and cause the angels extra care over Him? (See Matt. 4:5, 6)
    d. His answer. (Matt. 4:7. See also Deut. 6:16)
    e. Should the Kingdom be founded through the use of political forces, or through social and religious forces based upon love for man? (See Matt. 4:8, 9)
    f. His answer. (Matt. 4:10. See also Deut. 6:13)
4. When the period of temptation was over, Angels came and ministered unto Him. (See Matt. 4:11)
5. During the forty days of fasting and prayer and the ministration of Angels, Jesus had wrought out a settled policy of procedure, a policy quite different to that expected by the Jews.
    a. He would not use His power and office for self-benefit.
    b. He would not use His power to gain the favor of men.

c. He would not do that which would show distrust in the watchful care of His Father.

d. He would serve only one God, His Father in Heaven.

C.–Similar behavior situations to those in His temptations faced Christ during His ministry. But, having decided upon His course of action, He was able, when such problems arose, to settle them quickly, and then to go straight ahead in His constructive work.

1. After feeding the five thousand the people would make Him king. (See John 6:15)
   a. He resorts to prayer. (John 6:15; Matt. 14:23)
2. When Christ first tried to disclose the fact that He must be killed, Peter rebuked Him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." It is quite likely that Peter had in mind the current conception of the Messiah. Christ recognized, however, in the statement a form of the old temptation. (See Matt. 16:21-23)
   a. Observe His answer. (Matt. 16:23)
3. Christ's brothers bade Him go to the Feast of the Tabernacles, saying, "If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." A similar principle is here involved to that noted in the temptations where Christ was urged to cast himself down from the Temple; but now it came through His nearest kin whom He loved.
   a. The incident. (John 7:3-5)
   b. His answer. (John 7:6-8)
4. He was frequently tempted to show a sign so that the people might believe on Him. (See Matt. 12:38; 16:1; 22:35; John 6:30)
5. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when Christ faced the final result of His previous decision, He

passed through great agony of soul. The flesh weakened, and He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. 26:36-45)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–What it means to be tempted.

1. When one is tempted what are the important aspects of the situation? List them.
2. Study a case in which you were tempted. This will help to analyze the situation.

B.–Christ tempted.

1. What things had just happened before He was tempted?
2. How did these affect Him?
3. Why do you think He went into the wilderness?
4. How long did He struggle with His problem?
5. What methods of procedure faced Him?
6. Discuss the three ways in which He was tempted. Give His answer to each temptation.
7. What relation existed between Jesus' knowledge of who He was, what powers were His, and His temptation?
8. Of what value to Him was the knowledge of the Old Testament?
9. Of what value is a knowledge of the scriptures to us?
10. After forty days what policy of action had He wrought out?
11. Who ministered unto Him at the end of the period?

C.–Other occasions.

1. In what way did people try to tempt Jesus after He had fed the five thousand?
2. What temptation was there in Peter's remark when Jesus tried to tell His disciples He must be killed?

3. Explain the situation when His own brothers said, "If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world."
4. List some of His other temptations.

D.–General.

1. What did Jesus always do when great problems faced Him?
2. How may we follow Jesus' example when temptations come?
3. How do you know that you have made the proper decision when you are tempted?

E.–What is your conclusion respecting the significance of His temptation?

THE SET OF THE SOUL

One ship goes east, another west
   By the selfsame winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale,
   That determines the way they go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of Fate
   As we voyage along through life.
'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal,
   And not the calm or the strife.

PROBLEM 11

JOHN THE BAPTIST TESTIFIES OF CHRIST

During the time of Christ's forty-day fast John the Baptist continued his work, calling people to repentance and baptizing them. As explained in a previous lesson, the Pharisees had sent priests and Levites to question John. When John told them that he was only the voice of one crying repentance they asked, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" John answered that he baptized with water, "but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me." Christ had evidently returned from His fasting and prayer, and had again mingled with the multitudes along the Jordan. He was now prepared for His ministry, by the testimony which came to Him at His baptism and later through the endowments which resulted from his fasting and prayer and temptation.

PROBLEM: How did Christ win His first disciples? What help was rendered by John the Baptist?

Bible Reference: John 1:19-51.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–John testifies of Jesus.

1. To the priests and Levites. (John 1:23-27) Observe that he tells them of the presence of Jesus among them, but they do not know him.
2. To others. (John 1:29-34)
    a. When John saw Jesus coming to him he said: "Behold the Lamb of God." (See Isa. 53)
    b. How did he know Jesus was the Messiah? "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him,

the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John 1:33)

  c. John's further testimony.
    "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him."
    "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."

B.–John tells his own disciples of Jesus.

1. John was with two of his disciples when Jesus walked by. Pointing to Jesus he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:35, 36)
2. What did the disciples do? (See John 1:37-39)
3. Who were these disciples?
    a. See John 1:40.
    b. The other, in all probability, was John the evangelist.
4. Their testimony.
    a. "We have found the Messias."
    These were the words of Andrew spoken to his brother Peter. Then he brought Peter to Jesus. (John 1:41, 42)
5. On the following day Jesus found Philip. (John 1:43)
6. Philip's testimony to Nathanael. (John 1:45)
    a. Nathanael doubts. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"
    b. He is converted. (See John 1:46-51)
7. In what way may we be like Andrew?

C.–Thus with six friends, including John the Baptist, Christ began His ministry. Looking back over the past nineteen hundred years we are now able to see the truthfulness of His parable of the leaven, wherein He likened the Kingdom of God to a little leaven that finally "leaveneth the whole mass."

1. Did Christ make a good choice of disciples as His first converts?

II.–Organization of Material.
- A.–John testifies of Jesus.
    1. What did he tell the priests and Levites?
    2. How did he learn that Jesus was the Messiah?
- B.–John tells his disciples.
    1. What did he tell two of his disciples?
    2. Who were these men?
    3. What was their testimony?
    4. How did these first men help Jesus?
    5. Name the first six disciples of Jesus.
    6. Why do you think Andrew was anxious to tell his brother? And the others to tell more men?
- C.–General.
    1. What spirit in Christianity has marked its spread and growth?
    2. How may we help therein?

O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me to bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong;

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give—
With Thee, O Master, let me live!

—*Washington Gladden.*

Problem 12

THE FEASTS OF THE JEWS

It is necessary to preserve continuity in our study. We therefore refer in this lesson to events, not as problems, but rather for purposes of information. Important among these events is the study of the various feasts and their significance in the life of every Jew.

Three days after Christ had made the friendship of John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, there was a marriage feast at Cana, the home town of Nathanael (John 2:1, 2) Jesus and His few disciples were invited. Christ's mother was there also. This feast was likely held on Wednesday. If so, it was the marriage feast of a maiden; for Wednesday was the day on which such weddings occurred. Widows were married on Thursday. (See Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Vol. I, p. 345)

Perhaps no other people held marriage in higher esteem than did the Hebrews. From early childhood days the children were taught the sanctity of marriage, and were encouraged to be ready for the event when they were eighteen years of age. The age for girls was even somewhat earlier than their eighteenth year. Marriage was thought to carry with it the forgiveness of sins. Pious people even fasted before a wedding and confessed their sins. The bridal pair on the wedding day symbolized the union of God and Israel. There was, at the time of Christ, a bold allegory which represented God as having spoken the blessing over the cup at the union of our first parents, at which event Michael and Gabriel acted as groomsmen and angels furnished sacred hymns. Thus wedding feasts to the religious Jew were much like a sacrament. To bring a gift of wine for the invited guests was considered an act of friendship and love. (See Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 351-363)

- I.–Assimilative Material.
  - A.–The Bible story of the wedding. (Read John 2:1-12)
    - 1. Christ's mother reported to Him that, "They have no wine."
    - 2. Christ provided the gift of wine.
      - a. Pots of stone were prepared.
      - b. Christ ordered them filled with water.
      - c. Now draw off and serve.
    - 3. The results.
      - a. The ruler of the feast was pleased.
      - b. Disciples of Christ believed on Him.
    - 4. After the wedding.
      - a. They went to Capernaum.
  - B.–After remaining a few days in Capernaum Jesus departed for Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover.
  - C.–A brief study of the feasts of the Jews at the time of Christ.
    - 1. The Feast of the Passover.
      - a. When held: 1st month, Nisan, 14th to 21st days. (March-April)
      - b. Distinctive characteristic. (See Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 683)
    - 2. The Feast of Pentecost.
      - a. Time: fifty days after the Passover.
      - b. Its purpose. (See Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 698)
    - 3. The Feast of Tabernacles.
      - a. Time: 15th to 22nd of the 7th month.
      - b. Purpose. (Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 888)
    - 4. The Feast of Dedication.
      - a. Time: 25th day of the 8th month (November-December)

b. Purpose. (Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 184)

5. The Feast of Purim.
   a. Held on the 14th day of the 12th month.
   b. Purpose. (Hastings' Bible Dictionary, p. 777)

Comment:

> "Of the feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles were celebrated in Jerusalem, to which the Jews came from all quarters. The others required no such journey to Jerusalem." (Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 69) These feasts at Jerusalem and at home formed no small part of the religious education and influence surrounding the life of every growing child. Again, through the feasts the Law was kept fresh in the minds of all the people and great periods in their history were with pride remembered.

Note: For obvious reasons the cleansing of the Temple will not be discussed at this time. It may be studied with greater significance later, during the study of the last week of Christ's life, when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Marriage.

1. How did the Jews regard marriage?
2. How is marriage regarded in America today?
3. In what ways do churches try to safeguard the marriage covenant?

B.–The Feasts of the Jews.

1. Name some of the important feasts of the Jews, and give the purpose of each.
2. Which of the feasts were celebrated at Jerusalem?
3. What values came to the people through the observance of these feasts?

PROBLEM 13

ADJUSTMENT TO LIFE'S HIGHER VALUES

The only miracle we have mentioned so far is the changing of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. When Jesus went to the Feast of the Passover, He had not yet begun His ministry. We are led to believe, however, by John 2:23, 24, and by the question of Nicodemus, that Jesus performed many miracles at Jerusalem during the Feast. This He did, or else John has not arranged the events chronologically. At any rate, Jesus was unable to trust the faith of people who believed because of some sign. Furthermore, He was very careful not to make great claims for Himself. Had He done so, the Pharisees no doubt would have been offended and He would have aroused opposition before He had even begun His work.

It is a peculiar fact, however, that in those days the miraculous was the expected, and no teacher seemed to be real without the evidence of miracles. This is somewhat hard for us to understand, since our scientific age tends toward the opposite view, that of believing things real only when they may be explained by natural causes.

It is but natural that the miracles of Jesus came to the early attention of the members of the Sanhedrin. One of these, Nicodemus by name, was evidently more impressed than others. He came by night to see Jesus and make closer investigation.

PROBLEM: What did Christ consider necessary in order for one to see and enter into the Kingdom of God?

Bible Reference: John 3:1-12.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The occasion which called forth the problem.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

1. Nicodemus must have asked about the Kingdom of God, or else Christ must have perceived that he was pondering over the common expectancy that the Messiah would soon come to establish His Kingdom; for Christ's answer implies such a question.
2. Christ's answer.
   "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)
3. Nicodemus was perplexed.
   "How can a man be born when he is old?" (John 3:4)
4. Christ answered again, but this time in somewhat clearer terms: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)
   a. Jesus evidently referred to the baptism of John, which required repentance and a forgiveness of sins.
   b. Furthermore, it is clear that Nicodemus had not accepted John the Baptist nor his teachings.
   c. Nicodemus, no doubt, pondered over the common Jewish belief that, being descendants of Abraham, they automatically were guaranteed a place in the Kingdom of God. (See Matthew 3:9) Christ seemed to have perceived his thought, for He added: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that

I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:6, 7)

5. Nicodemus still did not understand.
    a. "How can these things be?" (John 3:9)
6. Christ made final answer. (See John 3:10-12)
    a. Christ testifies.
    "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."
    b. It seems most likely that Christ here referred to what He actually knew about baptism and the new birth. He had seen the change wrought in the lives of the disciples of John. Above all, He Himself had experienced being born again. Through His baptism He had learned from the Heavens that He was the Son of God, and through it the significance of His great mission rushed upon Him with such force that He was driven into the wilderness for fasting and prayer.
7. Had Christ failed?
    a. Christ said to Nicodemus: "Ye receive not our witness."
    b. But Nicodemus was moved.
        (1) Later, towards the close of Christ's ministry, when the Pharisees had sent officers to take Jesus but had returned without Him, the rulers were angered and said, "But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." The friendship of Nicodemus then came to light: "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" (John 7:49-51)

Note: The conversation very likely stopped with verse twelve. This view is held by many modern authorities. Note the change in person of the pronoun after verse twelve. (See Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 71)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The visit of Nicodemus.

1. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus? Why by night?
2. What was his question? What was his attitude?
3. What was Christ's answer?
4. As a Jew of high authority, would Nicodemus question the necessity for his being baptized? Why?
5. How did the Jews expect to be able to enter the Kingdom?
6. Nicodemus could not understand. Then Christ said one must be born of water and of the Spirit. What did He mean ?
7. When he still did not understand, Christ said, "We speak that we do know." To what did He likely refer?
8. Although Nicodemus did not accept Christ's teachings, give evidence that he became friendly.

B.–Thought Questions.

1. In what way is baptism a power in determining conduct?
2. In what way does it give us the privileges of the higher values of life?
3. What is your attitude regarding the necessity and value of baptism?

DISILLUSIONMENT

Yet while in disillusionment I sit
  Turning the pages of that yesterday,
While through my memory old fancies flit
  Like the bright colored dragonflies in May,

Although I would not one false stone replace
  Of all man's shattered shrines that round me lie,
I know somewhere there is a living grace,
  Some glory that awaits the seeing eye.

I know there is beauty that abides,
  And makes as one the living and the dead;
Born of the dust, within the mind it hides
  The while I sing or break my bitter bread.

It is as if some God plucked at my sleeve,
And cried, "Behold my wound, believe, believe!"
—*Hugh Robert Orr.*

Problem 14

NOBILITY OF CHARACTER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Following the Passover Feast, "Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. * * * (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)" (John 3:22; 4:2)

This marks the only time when Jesus and His disciples baptized—at least this is the only recorded scripture telling of such work. Christ had not yet begun His real ministry. It is interesting to note that by permitting His disciples to baptize after the manner of John's baptism, He not only placed again His divine approval upon the ordinance of baptism, but testified to the genuineness of the work of John.

Some authors would put this event later in Christ's ministry. We are not so much concerned with points of higher criticism as we are with the problem which the occasion developed.

"John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." (John 3:23-25)

Evidently during the discussion, the fact that Jesus and His disciples were baptizing was emphasized; for John's disciples came and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." (John 3:26)

There is a note of jealousy and anxiety in their report to John. They were loyal to him and to his teachings. They were unable, as yet, to transfer their faith from John to Jesus, though John had repeatedly testified of

Him. Still to them it did not seem right that Jesus should adopt John's baptism or in any way overshadow him; for their report indicated that many were flocking to hear Jesus.

PROBLEM: In what way did John show nobility of character and steadfastness of purpose when his disciples reported that Jesus baptized, moreover that "all men come to him?"

Bible References: John 3:22-36; 4:2.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–John answered and said to those who had brought the above report, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." (John 3:27)

1. Notwithstanding the fact that he had repeatedly told them that he was only preparing the way of the Lord, yet he saw in their report that they still did not understand.
2. He continued speaking: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him."
   a. We admire John's splendid humility and self-denial, we respect his earnestness and faithfulness in doing well the thing he was sent to do. We reverence his loyalty to the Lord who was soon to supplant him. "The setting of his own life-sun was to be the rising of One infinitely more bright; the end of his mission the beginning of another far higher." (Edersheim, "Life and Times of Jesus," p. 392)
   b. John, therefore, rejoices in the Lord.
   "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3:29)

c. Then, with the vision of a prophet, he saw the closing days of his work. "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30)

d. His heart was filled with joy, yet his soul must have been touched with sadness. "It was John's last testimony of Jesus, and it was preceded by this testimony of Jesus to John. For divergent, almost opposite, as from the first their paths had been, this practical sanction on the part of Jesus of John's baptism, when the Baptist was about to be forsaken, betrayed, and murdered, was Christ's highest testimony of him. Jesus adopted his baptism ere its waters forever ceased to flow, and thus He blessed and consecrated them. He took up the work of His forerunner, and continued it. The baptismal rite of John, administered with the sanction of Jesus, was the highest witness that could be borne to it." (Edersheim, pp. 392-393)

Note: On the first reading it would appear that John 3:31-36 is a continuation of John's answer to his disciples. But after further study most authorities agree that these sayings must have been the words of John, the evangelist, who wrote the book of John. (See Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 73)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus and John baptizing.

1. Give the only recorded scripture that Jesus and His disciples baptized.
2. Where was John baptizing at this time?
3. What problem arose with John's disciples about Jesus' baptizing?
4. What was John's attitude and answer?

5. What do you like about John's attitude?
6. Give John's prophetic words regarding the progress of his work and that of Christ.

B.–List some qualities of character which you admire in John.

LOYALTY

Speaking of things that go to make
  A man of sterling worth—
The one with Loyalty today
  Is the salt of all the earth;

Who's loyal to his boss, his job,
  And faithful through and through
To all the very finest things
  That he can be and do;

Who's loyal to his own home town,
  His ideals and his friends,
And faithful to his better self
  On which so much depends,

Who's loyal to his highest dreams,
  His faith, his God, his creed;
For if he's true to all of these—
  Then he is true, indeed!

PROBLEM 15

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL

PROBLEM: What happens when the Master Teacher touches the heart of man?

Bible Reference: John 4:1-43.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus and His disciples departed from Judea, where His disciples, under His direction, had been baptizing.

1. Give the most likely reason for their doing so. (See John 4:1-3)

Comment:

The shortest route from Judea to Galilee was through Samaria. The Galileans usually took this way, but the Judeans and particularly the Pharisees and Rabbis took the longer route around Samaria and through Peraea. (Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 74) Why this difference between the two people?

The time when they arrived at the well of Jacob is a disputed point. Some think it was about noon, but others hold that it was near six o'clock in the evening. The difference of opinion seems to depend upon whether the account refers to the Jewish or the Roman day. (Edersheim, Vol. 1, p. 408) According to the Bible "it was about the sixth hour." (John 4:6) The well is situated a little south of the city of Sychar.

His disciples, with the possible exception of John, had gone into the city to buy food. Previous to the time of Christ, any food of the Samaritans was considered by the Rabbis to be to the Jew, like swine's flesh, unclean and unfit. However, at the time of Christ this ban had been removed, so that Samaritan food was now considered clean. (Dummelow, p. 781)

2. While Jesus waited for the return of His dis-

ciples, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. "Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

Comment:

A Rabbi would not speak to a woman, much less a woman of Samaria. The fact that Jesus spoke to her must have surprised her greatly; for she asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (John 4:9)

3. Christ's answer. "If thou knewest * * * who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (John 4:10)
    a. Note the woman's further question. (John 4:12)
4. Christ answered again. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13, 14)
    a. "Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." (John 4:15)

Comment:

She failed to catch the spiritual meaning which Jesus intended. We cannot wonder at this, for Nicodemus, one of the great Jewish teachers and a member of the Sanhedrin, had also failed to understand. She could think only of the actual water in the well of Jacob, so she interpreted His words literally. However, He had caught her interest.

5. No doubt by this time Christ had perceived that this woman was in need of help. Whenever the occasion came to Him to help the poor, the sick, and the morally weak, there He threw the weight of His teaching and power, and left the

individual facing the future with new hope. With this in mind it was necessary for Him to bring to her consciousness her own life. (See John 4:16-18)

a. The woman seemed desirous to change the subject from a personal one to a general point of dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans, or else she perceived that He was a prophet and as such He would be able to answer to her satisfaction the question she asked.

b. Her question. (John 4:20)

6. Christ avoided the point of dispute, and gave her a glimpse of what the worship of the future would be. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John 4:21, 23)

Comment:

Both Jews and Samaritans held that place was important in worship. (See Deut. 27:2-6) The Samaritans in their scripture had changed the word Ebal to Gerizim.

a. What do you think Christ meant by His answer in John 4:21, 23?

b. Explain His statement in John 4:22. (See II Kings 17:29-35)

7. The woman expressed the Samaritan belief in the coming of the Messiah. (John 4:25) He would come and teach them all things concerning the Kingdom of God and how to live therein. Contrast this idea with that of the Jews.

8. A natural situation now confronted Him for

His first great declaration. "Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee am he.*" (John 4:26)

a. Could it be true that here, before her very eyes, was the Messiah whom the Jews as well as the Samaritans expected would come to establish the Kingdom of God? Thus she was left to ponder, for the disciples had returned from the city. (John 4:27)

9. The results.

"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
"Then they went out of the city, and came unto him." (John 4:28-30)

Comment:

The Bible records are silent with respect to any direct statement concerning the further faith and actions of this woman; but the scriptures say, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman." If others believed, she must have done. If so, she was lifted from a life of debauchery to a new consciousness of life, to a new hope. A new purpose filled her soul, and new ideals formed her standard of conduct. Thus when the Master touches the heart, the soul responds and the individual is brought into a newness of life where the higher values lie and where happiness and joy abide.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The return to Galilee.

1. Why did Jesus return to Galilee through Samaria?
2. Which route would a Rabbi have taken?
3. Was it right for a Jew to accept the food of Samaritans?

B.–The woman of Samaria at the well.

1. What did Jesus ask of her?

2. Why was she surprised?
3. What did He mean when He said, "If thou knewest . . . who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water?"
4. Why did not the woman understand?
5. How did He arouse her further interest?
6. Desirous of changing the subject, what question did the woman ask?
7. What new idea concerning the worship of the future did Christ disclose?
8. What was the belief of the Samaritans with respect to the duties of the Messiah?
9. What did Jesus tell about Himself?
10. What were the final results of His teachings?

He wrought the splendor of the sea, the wonder of the land,
Oh, may we find His glory in His works on every hand.
    Until our eyes are trained to see
    We do not know divinity—
We can but poorly worship Him until we understand.

—*Anna B. Musser.*

PROBLEM 16

THE WORK OF THE MESSIAH

During the recent weeks Herod Antipas had fallen in love with his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, and had married her. John the Baptist had fearlessly declared that it was not right for Herod to have her; for John, you will remember, advocated good moral conduct. What John had said, offended Herodias. Because of her, the scriptures say, Herod had John cast into prison. This event brings forcefully to mind again John's testimony: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." (Matt. 4:12)

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

"And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:14, 15)

PROBLEM: In the lesson on the temptation of Jesus we suggested that the struggle of Christ consisted in determining the right procedure for His work. When He arrived at Nazareth, His own home town, on the Sabbath He was asked to read in the Synagogue. The passage He chose to read disclosed the true work of the Messiah. What was it?

Bible Reference: Luke 4:16-30.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–We should at this time get a fair idea of the geography and history of Galilee. For a brief consideration of these see "Life of Christ," by Burton and Mathews, page 80.

B.–When the Sabbath came, Jesus went to the Synagogue to worship. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Luke 4:16)

Comment:

1. The officials of the Synagogue consisted of the *Chazzan,* or minister, the elders, or rulers. All the rulers were duly examined as to knowledge before they were ordained to office.
2. The Synagogue service consisted of the following:
    a. Services began with two prayers.
    b. Then followed what may be called the Jewish creed, the Shema. It consisted of three passages from the Pentateuch: Deut. 6:4-9; Deut. 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41.
    c. The Shema was followed by another prayer.
    d. Next, the one who officiated stepped to the Ark and there repeated certain Eulogies or benedictions. There were eighteen in number, but only the first three and the last three were repeated on the Sabbath.
    e. This completed the liturgies. The minister at this time approached the Ark and brought forth a roll of the Law. It was taken from its case and the covering of cloth removed. It was then time to read portions of the Law. On the Sabbath at least seven men were called upon in turn to read.
    f. Having completed the reading of the Law, the next thing in order was to read the Prophets. It is not known whether Jesus officiated throughout the services; but He was asked to read from the Prophets. It was also customary for the one who read to speak thereafter.

C.–"And there was delivered unto him the book (roll) of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book (roll), he found the place where it was written,

"*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*" (Luke 4:17, 18. See also Isa. 61:1, 2)

Comment:

This passage gives the spirit of the work of the Messiah. Furthermore, it defines His duty. In the lesson on the Jewish idea of the Messiah and Jesus, we quoted this sentence: "Others, again, believed that the Kingdom was primarily a spiritual experience utterly untouched by any of the sordid considerations of politics." Further, in the lesson on the temptation of Jesus we made the point that Jesus faced two methods of procedure, and was able finally to choose the one which led to service. When He read the above passage, therefore, He disclosed for the first time His conception of His work as the Messiah. Analyze the verse carefully. What was to be the spirit of His work?

D.–After reading the above passage, Jesus gave the roll to the minister, and sat down. (Speaking was done sitting down.)

"And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:21)

1. How were the people affected?

"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22)

Comment:

Jesus evidently sat observing their attitude. They were making application of His sermon. It was but natural that the idea of His scriptural fulfillment was secondary in their thoughts, and that the thing which most troubled them was Jesus. "Is not this Joseph's son?" Have we not known him all his life? Do we not know his brothers and sisters? How is it possible that his claim can be true?

2. Jesus perceived the situation.

"Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country." (Luke 4:23)

Comment:

There can be little doubt but that His own townsmen wanted to see miracles such as they had heard of at Cana and at Jerusalem and Capernaum. They desired a test.

3. Continuing He said, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country." (Luke 4:24)

Comment:

If ever in His life He was tempted to do miracles to prove His authority, it was now. Here were His own kin and His own friends and acquaintances—people he had known all His life. But He remained steadfast. He would not use His power at the bidding of people who wished for a miracle through which to establish their faith in Him.

4. They were very likely disappointed. Further, when He remarked that it was the Gentiles who were most favored of the Lord during the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, He drew down their wrath. (See Luke 4:25-28)
5. He was rejected. (Luke 4:29)
6. He went to Capernaum, where He made His headquarters from then on.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Beginning of Christ's work.
  1. Why was John cast into prison?
  2. After that where did Jesus go to begin His work?
  3. Compare the size of Palestine with Utah, or Idaho, or Arizona.
  4. Compare them with respect to altitude, climate, and population.
  5. Give the chief products and industries of Galilee.

B.–The Synagogue service.
  1. Describe the Synagogue service on the Sabbath.
  2. Repeat the Bible passage which Christ chose to read during the service.

3. To what extent was this passage prophetic of Christ's mission and the spirit thereof?
4. After reading, Jesus began to explain. What did He say?

C.–Result.

1. How were the people affected?
2. What did Jesus perceive? What did He say?
3. Why were they angry when He told them of blessings which came to the Gentiles?
4. What had they likely wanted Him to do?

D.–General.

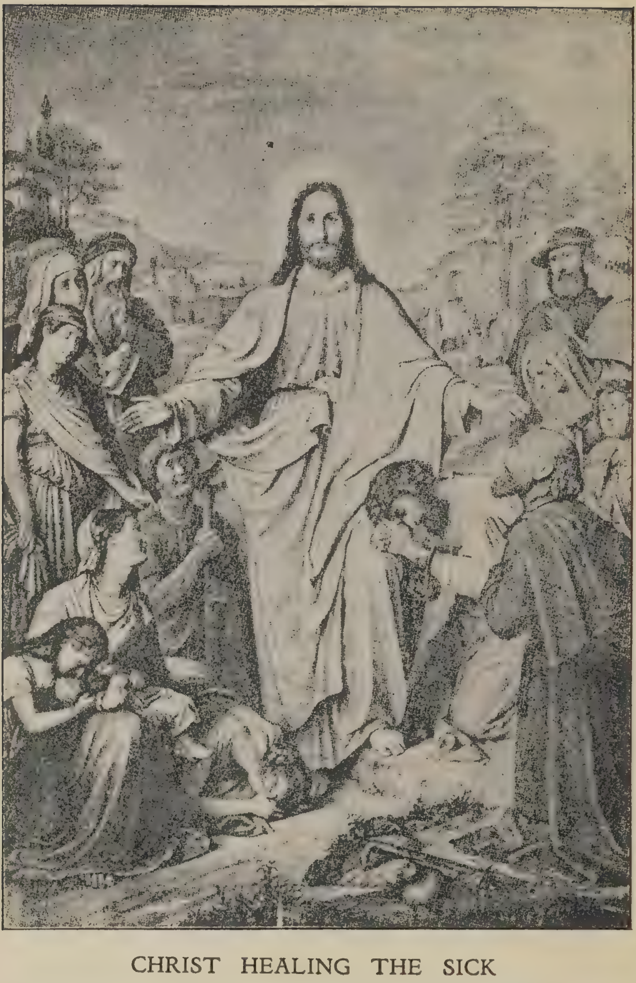
1. What does this event indicate concerning the religious spirit of the Jews?
2. What were the final results of His visit to Nazareth?
3. What connection is there between Christ's purpose as disclosed here and His temptation?
4. What were to be the spirit and action of His mission?

WORK

Let me but do my work from day to day
  In field or forest, at desk or loom,
  In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
  "This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
  Of all who live, I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way."

Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
  To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
  Then shall I cheerful greet the labouring hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall
  At eventide, to play and love and rest,
  Because I know for me my work is best.

—*Henry Van Dyke.*



CHRIST HEALING THE SICK

PROBLEM 17

THE METHOD OF JESUS DISCLOSED

There can be little doubt *but* that some of the first disciples had accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem to the Passover Feast, and had remained with Him to baptize in Judea. But when He returned to Galilee they must have left Him for a brief time, probably when they reached Cana, and had gone back to their homes. Jesus went to His home in Nazareth. What happened there we have just studied in the previous lesson.

The period on which we are about to enter marks a great advance. The work which Jesus had come to perform now began to take more definite shape, and indicated more clearly that He was following a well-defined purpose and plan of procedure.

PROBLEM: In what significant way did Jesus begin His ministry?

Bible References: Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.
  A.–Introduction.
    1. How were some other important ministries begun?
      a. Joseph who was sold into Egypt.
        (1) What characterized his life's work?
      b. Moses.
        (1) His duty and method of procedure.
      c. John the Baptist.
        (1) His spirit and message.
  B.–The way in which Christ began His ministry.
    1. He called a few disciples whom He could trust.

(See Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11)

2. He spoke as one with authority. (Mark 1:22)

Comment:

"Both the acts and words of Jesus made a strong impression. The people were struck by the difference between the acts and words of Jesus and those of the teachers to whom they were accustomed. Acts and words alike implied a claim of authority different in kind from that of the most respected of the Rabbis (Mark 1:27; Matt. 7:29) The Rabbis interpreted the law as they found it; Jesus laid down a new law (Matt. 5:2, 22, etc.) and when He spoke it was with an air of command." (Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ," p. 59)

3. He began in the spirit and power of His anointment.

Comment:

Christ opened His ministry with the same announcement, practically, as did John (Mark 1:14, 15) Again, Jesus made use of the same baptism. After this, however, the methods of procedure diverged. Although John saw the need for moral reformation as a necessary preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, yet he did not indicate that he had a different concept of the Messiah and the Kingdom than that generally expressed by the Jews.

On the other hand, Christ's procedure was revolutionary, both to the most commonly accepted idea of the Messiah and to the mode of carrying out His ministry. We have tried to make the basis for His course clear in the lesson on the temptation of Jesus, and have emphasized His idea of His work as disclosed in the Synagogue at Nazareth. The application of this method presupposed supernatural power.

Logically, we should expect that when Christ began His ministry He would follow a procedure in harmony with the purpose of His work, as set forth in Luke 4:17, 18.

In view of all this, we cannt conceive that He began His ministry by miracles, such as healing the sick, for the purpose of gaining followers. We should like, rather, to emphasize the idea that He was proceeding according to His anointment, which was to preach to the poor and to heal the sick, etc. In doing this, however, He faced a grave problem, that of performing His work without doing miracles expressly to demonstrate His power. This was the more true because the idea of the times expected the miraculous of any true prophet. That He sensed the problem keenly is shown by His repeated instructions to those whom He healed and to the Pharisees, who upon numerous occasions asked for a sign. To the first He said so frequently: "Go your way and tell no man;" to the latter: "No sign shall be given thee."

From His point of view, therefore, His miracles must have been performed as acts of mercy and love; acts in close harmony with His necessary method of procedure; acts of loyalty to the spirit of His anointment and mission. (See Sanday's "Outlines of the Life of Christ," pp. 31-63)

4. Thus He began His work, teaching the people the way to a more abundant life and healing their bodies from physical handicaps, actually setting "at liberty them that are bruised."
   a. The unclean spirit. (Mark 1:23-28)
   b. Peter's mother-in-law healed of fever. (Mark 1:29-31; Matt. 8:14, 15)
   c. Many when evening came. (Luke 4:40; Mark 1:32-34)

Comment:

These miracles are listed in this lesson merely to show how Jesus began His ministry. The study of the incidents themselves should follow in the next lesson. Again, we have not emphasized His teaching, for we expect to do that when we consider His Sermon on the Mount.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–How Jesus began His ministry.

1. How did He secure help?

2. What was the manner of His speaking?
3. How did it differ from that of the Rabbis?
4. How should He begin according to His anointment ?
5. How did His concept and mode of procedure differ from John's?
6. What spirit prompted Christ to heal people?
7. Why should healing of the sick present a grave problem?
8. What was the problem? How did He attempt to avoid it?
9. Show that He began according to the spirit shown in Isaiah 61:1, 2.

PROBLEM 18

JESUS AT WORK

At the beginning of our present century many of the great religious scholars were much inclined to deny the miracles of Jesus. However, by 1905, according to Sanday ("Outlines of the Life of Christ," p. 101), "There has been a certain tendency of late to recede from the extreme position in the demand of miracles. Harnack, for instance, writes in reference to the Gospel history as follows: 'Much that was formerly rejected has been re-established on close investigation and in the light of comprehensive experience'."

It is not hard to believe in the miracles of Jesus in this age when man has done and is doing the wonderful things which we experience daily. We need only mention a few of these wonders, as for example: the X-ray, the mechanical man, the radio, and the talkies. At first glance it almost seems that the inventors have accomplished the impossible and have set nature aside. But after a moment's thought one can see that nature has not been contradicted. It has been utilized.

In this connection, however, we must remember that Christ has been "anointed" to do His work, and that the significance of the temptation presupposes greater power than that of ordinary man. It is not within our power to say how He did His miracles. We venture the suggestion that He did not work contrary to nature, but in harmony with it.

PROBLEM: In what significant way did Jesus begin His ministry? (Same as in Lesson 17)

Bible Reference: Mark 1:23-28; Luke 4:33-37.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The man with the unclean spirit healed. (Mark 1:23-28)

1. Occasion.
   a. In the Synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath.
2. Jesus recognized by the unclean spirit.
3. Jesus' rebuke.
4. People amazed.

   "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." (Mark 1:27)

Comment:

Demoniacs are not described in the New Testament either as simply sick men or as ordinary cases of insanity. Their condition resembles that of persons suffering from what psychologists term "diseases of personality," "alternation of personality." The unfortunate men themselves certainly thought they were under control of some other personality from which they escaped when they were healed. (See Burton and Mathews' "Life of Christ," p. 84. Also "The Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah," by Alfred Edersheim, pp. 482-484)

B.–Peter's wife's mother healed of fever.

1. Occasion.
   a. They had left the Synagogue.
   b. At the home of Peter.
   c. Mother healed.
   d. She ministered unto them.

Comment:

The disease described as "burning fever" is given precisely the same name in the Talmud, where there is prescribed for it a magical remedy, of which the principal part is to tie a knife wholly of iron by a braid of hair to a thornbush, and to repeat on successive days Exodus

3:2, 3, then 4, and finally verse 5, after which the bush is to be cut down, while a certain magical formula is pronounced. Shabb 67a. (See Edersheim, p. 486) In contrast to this magic, note the majesty of the method of Christ.

C.–Towards the close of day they brought many sick to Him.

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them." (Luke 4:40)

Comment:

1. This was the Sabbath day. Therefore the people waited till sundown, the end of their Sabbath, before they brought their sick to be healed.
2. In the days of Jesus the people had very meager knowledge of the science of medicine and surgery. These are modern perfections. Again, the microscope had not been invented. The germs which produce pestilence, contagious diseases, and fevers of many kinds were unknown. Before this hidden enemy the people were helpless. In our day science and skill have accomplished that which to the ancients would have seemed most miraculous. The lame are made to walk, fevers are conquered, and the blind are made to see. Not long ago an old man, blind for years, boarded a street car in one of the large cities. Riding in the car was a prominent physician, who, seeing the helplessness of the old man and observing the apparent cause of his blindness, spoke to him, saying, "I can help you if you will come to my office." The old man, eager for relief, waited early the next morning at the office door. After examination he was sent to a hospital for an operation for cataract. Knowledge and skill were successful. The old man was made to see.

   In His way Jesus likewise banished sickness and disease.

D.–We are left in doubt concerning the mingled feelings of Jesus at the close of day. That He was deeply affected because of the service of the day is suggested in Mark 1:35. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Miracles.

1. Of late years what change with respect to belief in the miracles of Jesus has occurred among scholars of religion?
2. Is it hard or easy to believe in miracles? Why?

B.–Healing the man with the unclean spirit.

1. Where and when did Christ heal the man with the unclean spirit?
2. How were the people affected thereby?
3. What present-day diseases are found by psychologists to resemble cases like this one?

C.–Healing of Peter's wife's mother.

1. Show the difference between the way Christ healed her and the way the Jewish Talmud prescribed.

D.–Many brought to Him.

1. Why did the people wait until the close of day to bring their sick?
2. Give instances of healing today, both by the skill of the physician and by miracle.
3. How did Jesus feel at the close of such a day of service? What indicates that He was deeply affected?

E.–General.

1. Should we base our faith on miracles?
2. If not, upon what should we base faith?

PROBLEM 19

JESUS AT WORK
(*Continued*)

Early in the morning following the day that Christ had healed so many people in Capernaum, He was up making preparations for work in other cities. "And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." (Mark 1:38)

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt. 4:23)

PROBLEM: What significance must have surrounded the healing of the leper which made it important enough for the Gospel writers to single it out from many others for full description?

Bible References: Mark 1:39-45; Matt. 8:2-4.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Healing the leper.

1. While preaching in the various cities of Galilee, "there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." (Mark 1:40)

Comment:

a. This incident of healing the leper must have been out of the ordinary, for among all of the many cases of healing during this trip throughout Galilee, this is the only case which the Gospel writers have singled out and described in full.

b. In the case of leprosy the Rabbis had no hope of ever effecting a cure through any human agency. Cures sometimes did occur, but it was the belief of the Jew that such cases were effected through prayer and the forgiveness of God. The Rabbis, therefore, confessed themselves powerless in the presence of the disease. In their list of remedies prescribed for various kinds of diseases, leprosy is not mentioned. We cannot wonder at this, however, for the disease has baffled medical skill all through the ages. Only in very recent years have physicians discovered a probable cure. There is a colony of lepers kept in the Hawaiian Islands. The doctors in charge have discovered that the use of Chaumoogral oil effects at least temporary cures.

c. The unfortunate victims of leprosy not only suffered great bodily discomfort, but they were made to suffer mentally and spiritually as well. The Rabbis ascribed the disease to moral causes, a previous life of sin, which must be atoned for before God would forgive. They were thus denied love and sympathy. They were made to feel the dregs of the heartless formalism of their religious custom. As moral and physical outcasts they were made to live without the walls of the cities. Here, as people passed them by, they would call "Unclean! Unclean!" both as a warning and as a petition for someone to pray for them. (See Edersheim, p. 489) The leper which came to Christ was one of these.

2. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." (Mark 1:40-42)
3. "And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away." (Mark 1:43)

Comment:

Some suggest even more severe language as "cast him out." (See Edersheim, p. 496)

4. Christ's instructions to him.

a. "See thou say nothing to any man." (Mark 1:44)

Comment:

"He shrank from the fame connected with miracles, especially with such an one." (Edersheim, p. 496)

b. "But go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." (Mark 1:44)

Comment:

It will be interesting to those who desire to know how the priests diagnosed a case of leprosy and what Moses had commanded the patients to do for cleansing to read Leviticus, chapters 13 and 14.

Christ's injunction of silence was combined with that of presenting himself to the priest, in order to conform to the requirements of the Law of Moses. He was careful to teach no one to break the Law of Moses. In the case of leprosy, the sentiment was so strong that any disobedience of the custom was not only dangerous from the standpoint of the spreading of the disease, but was certain to raise strong opposition from the Rabbis.

5. However, the leper did not heed Christ's request of silence. He "began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter."
6. The result was, as Jesus no doubt expected, that He "could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places." (Mark 1:45)

Comment:

Upon first thought, one cannot conceive of danger lurking in His mission to heal the sick and set the captive free, etc. Yet in actual practice He came in conflict with strong religious customs, the breaking of which meant opposition. Thus, in spite of His aversion to publicity and His careful instruction to avoid a breach with Jewish authorities, it came unwittingly, no doubt, through an over-enthusiasm of the man to let his joy be known throughout the town. Thus Jesus' work was hampered, and He could no more openly enter into the city.

B.–The result.

1. With the exception of His being rejected at Nazareth, this marked the beginning of opposition in Galilee against Jesus. This opposition spread rapidly. The next incident which we are to study shows how true this was, for Pharisees from even Jerusalem came to Capernaum to investigate His work.

II.—Organization of Material.

A.—Healing the leper.

1. Early the next morning after His first day of healing, where did Jesus want to go? What was His reason?
2. What characterized His work as He went throughout Galilee?
3. What was the belief of the Rabbis with respect to the cause of leprosy?
4. According to the prevailing belief, what was the fate of the leper?
5. What marked the spirit of this occasion, both from the standpoint of Christ and of the leper?
6. What did Christ tell the leper to do after He had healed him?
7. Discuss how the priests diagnosed leprosy. What did a leper have to do for his cleansing?
8. Instead of obeying Jesus, what did the leper do?
9. Account for the importance given to this incident by the Gospel writers?
10. What kind of disease is leprosy?
11. What is the present status of this disease?

THE LEPER

"Room for the leper! Room!" and as he came
The cry passed on. "Room for the leper! Room!"
And aside they stood—
Matron, and child, and pitiless manhood—all
Who met him on his way—and let him pass.
"Depart! depart, O child
Of Israel, from the temple of thy God!
For he has smote thee with his chastening rod,
And to the desert wild,
From all thou lovest, away thy feet must flee,
That from thy plague his people may be free.

"Depart! and come not near
The busy mart, the crowded city more;
Nor set thy foot a human threshold o'er;"

* * * * *

Footsteps approached, and, with no strength to flee
He drew the covering closer on his lip,
Crying, "Unclean, unclean!" and, in the folds,
Of coarse sackcloth, shrouding up his face,
He fell upon the earth till they should pass.
Nearer the stranger came, and bending o'er
The leper's prostrate form, pronounced his name,
"Helon! Arise!" The voice was like the master-tone
Of a rich instrument—most strangely sweet;
And the dull pulse of disease awoke,
And for a moment beat beneath the hot
And leprous scales with a restoring thrill.
"Helon! Arise!" And he forgot his curse,
And rose and stood before him.

* * * * *

His leprosy was cleansed, and he fell down
Prostrate at Jesus' feet and worshipped him.

—*Nathaniel P. Willis.*

PROBLEM 20

CHRIST FORGIVES SIN

After some time had elapsed since healing the leper, Christ returned to Capernaum. It was soon noised about that He "was in the house." No doubt this house was the home of Peter. Edersheim says (p. 502): "We regard it (the house) as one of the better dwellings of the middle classes." "And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." (Mark 2:2)

PROBLEM: "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

Bible References: Mark 2:1-13; Matt. 9:1-8.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.—Assimilative Material.

A.—Kind of audience.

> "And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them." (Luke 5:17)

Comment:

Evidently Jesus' ministry in Galilee had attracted wide attention, since there were present people from all the towns of Galilee, from Judea, and even from Jerusalem. Greater importance must be given to the presence of Pharisees and doctors of the law (scribes). What could their purpose have been? Were some of them representatives sent out to investigate the marvelous reports of the work of Jesus? Did their presence indicate an approaching hostility? This was the first time that Pharisees and doctors of the law had appeared in meet-ings held by Jesus. It could not mean other than that opposition to his brief success had already commenced.

B.—The man with palsy was brought to Jesus.

"And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

"And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay." (Mark 2: 3, 4)

Comment:

"Jesus was speaking the Word, standing in the covered gallery that ran round the courtyard of such house (house of the middle classes) and opened into the various apartments. * * * It is scarcely possible to imagine that the bearers of the paralytic would have to dig through this (the roof) into a room below. * * * It would have been comparatively easy to have unroofed the covering of the gallery and to have made an opening through the lighter frame work which supported the tiles to let down their burden into the midst before Jesus." (Edersheim, p. 503)

There was breathless silence. All had heard before this of the wonderful work of Jesus. Were the Pharisees and Scribes actually to see His power demonstrated? Could He heal a palsied man? Would He do it in the presence of so many officials of the church? To the crowd the possibility of seeing a miracle wrought claimed their full attention. Possibly the Pharisees, on the other hand, had a deeper interest. Would He make any claim of authority? If so, what?

C.–Christ forgives sin.

There before Him lay the man—pale and motionless. He was tired and weary, for it had taken most of his weakened strength for him to pass through the ordeal of getting to Jesus. Faith found the way. Jesus recognized the situation.

"And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matt. 9:2. See also Mark 2:5)

Comment:

"It was argued by the Rabbis that, if the loss of an eye or a tooth liberated a slave from bondage, much more would the sufferings of the whole body be to free the soul from guilt." (Edersheim, p. 504) There was a definite belief that God punished people through sickness for their disobedience; that sickness, therefore, was an atonement for sin, that God only could cut short the atonement. But there was also a deeper belief that relief would not be granted to the sick unless their sins had first been forgiven them. Christ followed this deeper meaning when He said first, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

D.–The attitude of the Scribes.

"But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

"Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:6, 7. See also Isa. 43:25; Daniel 9:9)

E.–Christ perceives their question.

"And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

"Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (Mark 2:8, 9)

Comment:

It is clear that any one could say the former. The test of His power came in making possible the latter.

F.–Proof of His power.

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

"And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." (Mark 2:10-12)

Comment:

The Pharisees did not oppose so much the idea that Jesus healed the sick, for some of the Rabbis claimed the power to heal. What they did oppose most was any claim regarding His person or His authority which He might urge. (See Edersheim, p. 505) So far as any previous experience was concerned, the Pharisees were right in believing that God only had power to forgive sins. No such power had ever been delegated to man. But Jesus was the Son of man. This expression was well understood to refer to the Messiah. Thus, by forgiving the man and by healing him thereafter, Jesus virtually made claim to the Messiahship and to authority from God. He had power to forgive sins. This power, therefore, distinguished Christ's teachings from those of the Rabbis. It was a new doctrine given by one who spoke with authority.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–After preaching and healing throughout Galilee, Christ returned to Capernaum.

1. When He held meeting, who were in attendance?
2. Account for these people coming from widely different districts of Palestine.
3. With what varied purposes might they have come?

B.–Healing the man with palsy.

1. Describe the home of the middle class of people.
2. How did they get the man sick with the palsy to Jesus?

C.–Christ forgave his sin.

1. What was the customary teaching of the Rabbis concerning the relation of sin and sickness?
2. What was Christ's first statement to the sick man?

3. By thus speaking, the Rabbis thought Jesus had committed a most grievous sin. What sin did they have in mind?
4. According to their teachings, who only could forgive sin?
5. What was Christ's reason for saying what He did?
6. By forgiving sin, Jesus virtually made claim to what office?
7. How did the Jews proceed to secure forgiveness of sins?
8. How do we secure forgiveness?
9. Who can forgive sin?

PRAISE

What do they know of penitence
  Who never wrought Him wrong?
How can the sinless lift to Him
  Redemption's triumph-song?

There lies an eloquence of praise
  Imprisoned in a tear,
And crushed within a broken heart,
  That God bends low to hear.

—*Edith Daley*

Problem 21

CHRIST AND THE SINNER

Just as Christ had declared a new idea with respect to the forgiveness of sins, so, in the next incident which we are about to study, He disclosed a new concept of the kingdom's relation to sinners. The idea was made clear during the occasion of the call of Matthew Levi.

Problem: Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

Bible References: Matt. 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The call of Matthew Levi. (Mark 2:13, 14)

"And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

"And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alpheus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

Comment:

1. It would seem from the Bible that this call came immediately after Christ healed the man with palsy. However, Edersheim, page 514, suggests the idea that it may have occurred some time after, probably in the spring. This agrees the better with events which are to follow.
2. We assume that Matthew was well acquainted with Jesus and His work, for certainly by this time His miracles and teachings had reached every ear in Capernaum.
3. Matthew was a publican, a custom's collector. "It is important to notice that the Talmud distinguishes two classes of 'publicans': the tax-gatherer in general (Gabbai), and the Mokhes, who was especially the douanier or custom-house official. Although both

classes fell under the Rabbinic ban, the douanier—such as Matthew was—was the chief object of execration. And this because his exactions were more vexatious, and gave more scope for rapacity. The tax-gatherer collected the regular dues, which consisted of ground, income and poll-tax." * * * The custom collectors inflicted much greater hardship than did the tax gatherers. They collected duty upon all imports and exports, upon all that was bought and sold; bridge-money, road-money, harbour-dues, town-dues, etc. "The word Mokhes seems, in its root meaning, associated with the idea of oppression and injustice. The custom's collector was literally, as really, an oppressor." (Edersheim, p. 516) The viciousness of such a tax system lay in the fact that tax officials too frequently exacted more than was due, the extra amount being kept for personal gain. We can readily understand how the Jews grew to hate the men connected with such a system. Now Matthew was a publican, which the Jews placed in the worst group (Mokhes), a class to whom they believed repentance offered some difficulties.

Because Levi was a custom-house official, we have reason to believe that he was a man of ability. Certainly he showed great loyalty to Jesus when he left his lucrative employment to follow Him. It is no mean character who leaves all for a conviction.

B.–Levi's feast.

1. Levi made a feast for him. (Luke 5:29)
2. "And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him." (Mark 2:15)

C.–The Pharisees found fault.

1. "And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" (Mark 2:16)
2. Was there any cunning in their asking the disciples rather than Christ? May they have attempted to destroy faith in Jesus?

3. Christ's answer to the Pharisees.
"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mark 2:17)

Comment:

1. Reread Luke 4:18, which Christ gave in the Synagogue at Nazareth. Does He now throw further light on it?
2. There was some logic to the question of the Pharisees; for if He was the Messiah, a fact which the healing of the man with palsy indicated, then why did He associate with publicans and sinners? Was Christ's answer satisfactory or not? Why? To whom was it not satisfactory?
3. In this statement (Mark 2:17) Jesus declared a principle which fundamentally distinguished His teaching from other religions, and particularly that of Rabbinism. "They would first make him (the sinner) a penitent, and then bid him welcome to God; Christ first welcomed him to God, and so made him a penitent." (Edersheim, p. 507)
4. It was fitting that near the beginning of Christ's work the two principles of sin and the sinner should have been made clear by Jesus. "For, as these two questions of sin and the possible relation of the sinner to God, form the burden of the soul in its upward striving after God, so the answer to them forms the substance of all religion." (Edersheim, p. 508) But the vital difference between Rabbinism and the Gospel lies in this: Rabbinism had no love for the sinner; Jesus, on the other hand, freely invited all sinners, whatever their past, assuring them welcome and grace.

The three incidents which we have studied in recent lessons; namely, healing the leper, healing the man with palsy, and now the call of Matthew, are important for two reasons: 1st, they mark the beginning of official opposition to Christ's work; and 2nd, they gave Him an opportunity to correct the custom of the Pharisees with respect to the most fundamental aspect of religion, that of forgiveness of sin and the relation of the sinner to the Kingdom.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The call of Matthew.

1. Who was Matthew Levi?
2. Discuss his office and duties.
3. Why did the Jews dislike Levi?

B.–Levi's feast.

1. When Jesus attended the feast given by Levi, why did the Pharisees question His presence there?
2. What reason did Jesus give for not conforming to the customary standards of association?
3. How did His answer agree with His plan as disclosed at Nazareth?
4. Show how Christ's method of dealing with the sinner differed from that of the Rabbis.

C.–General.

1. Do you know people today who are willing to go contrary to custom and public opinion with respect to right and wrong? Are they held in high esteem? Why?
2. If one of our leaders followed the example of Jesus at the feast of Levi, would he be praised or blamed?
3. What standard guided Jesus in what He did?
4. Is this statement always true: "Birds of a feather flock together," when applied to our associates? Why?
5. What should be our ideals in our choice of companions and friends?
6. How shall we know when to and when not to attend functions which custom questions?

'Tis the human touch in this world that counts,
    The touch of your hand and mine,
Which means far more to the fainting heart
    Than shelter and bread and wine—
For shelter is gone when the night is o'er,
    And bread lasts only a day;
But the touch of the hand and the sound of the voice
    Sing on in the soul alway.—*Spencer M. Tree.*

PROBLEM 22

THE JEWISH SABBATH

Perhaps in no other thing did Christ give greater offense to the Rabbis than through His non-conformity to their Sabbath-day regulations. In order that we may the better understand the Jewish Sabbath-day customs and thereby with greater clarity see why Jesus attempted to show them a better way, we submit the following problem.

PROBLEM: What were some of the prevailing laws and and instructions concerning Sabbath-day observance among the Jews?

Bible References: Old Testament—Ex. 20:8-11; 23:11-12; 34:21; 35:1-3; Deut. 5:12-15.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Old Testament Law.

1. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

   "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

   "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." (Ex. 20:8-11)
2. Exodus 23:12 gives the purpose of this observance, that all may be refreshed.
3. The punishment for working on the Sabbath.

   "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath

> of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.
>
> "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day." (Ex. 35:2, 3)

Comment:

The above written laws of Moses formed the basis of the Jewish Sabbath. These laws were simple. God blessed the Sabbath and hallowed it. Its spirit was to be one of rest and refreshment for man and beast.

B.–The Sabbath of the Rabbis.

1. The Jews reverenced Moses as their great deliverer and law-giver. There was a well defined belief that Israel had not been redeemed, because as a nation they had never fully kept the Law. There was a possibility, however, that their Messiah would come if the people would obey God's commands. The Rabbis became, therefore, extremely anxious that Israel learn the laws, both written and oral, so that they might the better observe them. But as people faced the actual observance of the Sabbath a thousand and one questions presented themselves. Most of these seemed to center about the word "work." What did it mean when applied to the Sabbath? To answer this, schools of the Rabbis and the Scribes built up elaborate rules to help people the better to keep the commandment. Thus grew up the oral law which, at the time of Christ, was considered of even greater value than the written law since it explained how to observe the latter. Thus Rabbinism enlarged the simple Sabbath law as expressed in the Old Testament, and with great anxiety attempted to ensure the proper observance of the Sabbath. The result, however, was this, that it changed the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath rest into a complicated

code of external and burdensome ordinances and prohibitions. These ordinances were laid down in great detail in the Mishnah and the Jewish Talmud. You will remember in the lesson on the boyhood of Jesus, we made the statement that at ten years of age every Jewish boy was to begin the study of the Mishnah. It is most probable that Christ studied it too.

2. Attempts to define "work".

"The Mishnic tractate *Sabbath* stands at the head of twelve tractates which together form the second of the six sections into which the Mishnah is divided." (Edersheim, Vol. 2, p. 777) The most important part is found in the seventh chapter. In this it was made clear that guilt was in the state of mind rather than in the outward deed. Then the principal forms of work were laid down, thirty-nine in all.

a. Those referring to the making of bread:
Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sifting, grinding, sifting in a sieve, kneading, baking.

b. Those connected with dress:
Shearing wool, washing it, beating it, dyeing, spinning, putting thread on the loom, making two thrum threads, weaving two threads, separating two threads, making two knots, undoing a knot, sewing two stitches, tearing.

c. Those applied to writing:
Writing two letters (characters), scraping in order to write two letters, etc.

d. Those actions necessary around a private house:

Building, pulling down, extinguishing fire, lighting fire, hammering, and carrying from one possession to another.

Comment:

Each of these principal "works" involved prohibitions of a considerable number of others which were derived from them and hence designated as their descendants. Thus the Rabbis hoped to define "work."

3. How Rabbinism taught Israel to observe the Sabbath.

   A brief statement of some of the ordinances regulating Sabbath observance.

   a. The most common kind of labor would be that of carrying. It was necessary, therefore, to define "burden". The smallest weight was that of "a dried fig". Of course, everything over this was included. "If a person were in one place, and his hand filled with fruit stretched in another, and the Sabbath overtook him in this attitude, he would have to drop the fruit, since if he withdrew the full hand from one locality into another, he would be carrying a burden on the Sabbath."
   b. If an object were thrown in the air with the left hand and caught again in the right it involved sin, but if the person caught it in his mouth, he was not guilty since when eaten it no longer existed.
   c. If it rained and the water which came down was carried, there was no sin; but if the rain were collected from the roof it would be sin to carry it.
   d. "A woman must not go out on the Sabbath with such ornaments as could be taken off in the street * * * unless it be attached to the cap, nor with a gold crown, nor with a necklace or nosering, nor with rings, nor have a pin in her dress."
   e. "Women are also forbidden to look in a glass on the Sabbath because they might discover a

white hair and attempt to pull it out, which would be a grievous sin."

f. "A person might go about with wadding in his ear, but not with false teeth nor with a gold plug in the tooth."

g. The Mishnah says that in order to constitute a sin a thing (burden) must be carried from one locality to another in the ordinary way. If two persons carried an object which usually was carried by one there was no sin.

h. Certain things could be done on the Sabbath provided they were done differently than on ordinary days.

   (1) The mixing of certain solutions which were usually made in water was not counted as sinful, provided they were mixed in vinegar.

   (2) It was not a sin to turn bedding of straw with the foot, but if turned by hand it was sinful.

i. With respect to remedies, the Mishnah allowed a person to anoint and rub the body but not to the extent of making himself tired. One might not use any artificial remedial measures, such as taking a shower bath or rubbing wine or saliva on the eyelids.

j. From the Talmud we learn the following: It would break the Sabbath rest to climb a tree, to ride, to swim, to clap one's hands, to strike one's side, or to dance.

k. Later, Rabbinism advocated means of doing things on the Sabbath which were formerly prohibited. It had been unlawful to light fires, but it was made possible by the ordinance which said that if the fire were lighted with olive oil it might be kept going on the Sabbath.

Comment:

For further detailed study of the teachings of the Rabbis we refer you to Edersheim, Vol. II, pp. 777-787.

C.–From what has been said we may surmise what effect this elaborate code of burdensome ordinances had upon Christ, and why He sought to teach the people again the true spirit of the Sabbath as a day of rest. On the other hand we can understand somewhat better with what feelings the pious Pharisee and Rabbi met Jesus on the Sabbath. To them He was a dangerous non-conformist. They were men who were extremely anxious to have the people live all the laws so that God might smile upon them and finally send their Deliverer. But in His presence they failed to understand and know Him.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Sabbath Law.

1. State the Old Testament Sabbath law.
2. What was the purpose of the Sabbath? (See Ex. 23:12)
3. What was the penalty for breaking the Sabbath?

B.–The Sabbath of the Rabbis.

1. Why were the Rabbis so anxious for the people to keep the Sabbath?
2. How did the Rabbis define work?
3. What four principal kinds of work did they designate?
4. Name some of the particular kinds of labor under each heading.
5. How many kinds of work were there?
6. Work centered chiefly about the carrying of objects. What was their definition of "burden"?
7. Give some of the Sabbath prohibitions.
8. Show how they changed previous rules so as to be able to do certain prohibited work on the Sabbath.

9. By what standard did the Jews judge how to act on the Sabbath?
10. What was the spirit and object back of their Sabbath observance?
11. What things should the Jews do on the Sabbath?
12. List some things which you do on the Sabbath. Now check those that would have been prohibited, had you lived in the days of Jesus. How would such Sabbath regulations affect you?
13. How was Jesus affected by the burdensome Sabbath?
14. What characterized the observance of a Jewish Sabbath?

GOD SEND US MEN

God send us men whose aim will be,
Not to defend some worn-out creed,
But to live out the laws of Christ
In every thought, and word, and deed.

God send us men alert and quick,
His lofty precepts to translate,
Until the laws of Christ become
The laws and habits of the State.

God send us men! God send us men!
Patient, courageous, strong, and true,
With vision clear, and mind equipped,
His will to learn, His work to do.

God send us men with hearts ablaze,
All truth to love, all wrong to hate;
These are the patriots nations need,
These are the bulwarks of the State.

—*F. J. Gillman.*

PROBLEM 23

CHRIST'S SABBATH

In our discussion of Problems 19, 20, 21 we have seen how opposition to Jesus increased. There were indications that official sanction was given thereto. This opposition became stronger when Jesus did not conform to the teachings of the Rabbis concerning the proper observance of the Sabbath. We have seen in the previous lesson with what detail they prescribed every act on the Sabbath, and with what cunning they nullified their own rules when apparent necessity required. Now Jesus knew that their elaborate rules destroyed the real spirit of the Sabbath.

PROBLEM: How far should custom determine standards of Sabbath observance?

Bible References:

The infirm man at the pool of Bethesda—John, ch. 5.
The disciples plucking grain—Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5.
The man with the withered hand—Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Three class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.

1. "And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.
   "When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:5, 6)
   a. The sick man did not know Jesus. His answer showed that he had more faith in the

healing power of the pool. "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." (John 5:7)

2. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." (John 5:8)
   a. "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath." (John 5:9)
3. The Jewish opposition.
   a. They said, "It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." (John 5:10)

Comment:

They no doubt remembered the warning of Jeremiah (17:21). "Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem." Again, they were naturally well informed concerning the minute details of Sabbath observance laid down by the Rabbinical schools, in which great emphasis was placed on defining "burden." As regards substance, a "burden" was anything that could be put to any practical use. Thus it was unlawful to carry two horse's hairs because they could be made into a bird trap. Certainly a bed was a burden.

   b. The man did not know who had healed him. (John 5:11-13)
   c. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John 5:14)
   d. The Jews were informed by the man.
   "The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole." (John 5:15)

e. The result.

"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day." (John 5:16)

Comment:

The laws of the Mishnah prohibited the application or use on the Sabbath of any remedies that would bring improvement or cure to the sick. "All actual danger to life" superseded the Sabbath law, but nothing short of that. "Thus, to state an extreme case, if on the Sabbath a wall had fallen on a person, and it were doubtful whether he was under the ruins or not, whether he was alive or dead, a Jew or Gentile, it would be duty to clear away the rubbish sufficiently to find the body. If life were not extinct the labor would have to be continued; but if the person were dead nothing further should be done to extricate the body." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 787) In the case of the man whom Jesus healed, there was no immediate danger to life, for the man had already been sick for thirty-eight years. In such cases the Rabbis held that cures should await until some other day.

4. Christ's answer.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John 5:17, 18)

Comment:

They thought He had added blasphemy to Sabbath breaking. Both sins were punishable by death. But Christ had not broken the Sabbath, according to the written law. He had only failed to recognize the teaching of the Rabbis, who had added burdensome requirements recorded in the Talmud and the Mishnah. On the other hand He was doing those things which He was sent to do: "to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Note the passage he read in the Synagogue at Nazareth, Luke 4:18)

B.–Christ's disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath.

1. "And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn." (Mark 2:23)
2. The challenge of the Pharisees.
   "Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" (Mark 2:24)
   - a. By referring to the previous lesson show in how many ways, according to the teaching of the Mishnah and Talmud, His disciples had broken the Sabbath.
   - b. Did they break the written law?
   - c. Did they infringe upon the real Sabbath spirit?
3. Christ's answer to them.
   - a. "Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?
     "How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?" (Mark 2:25, 26. See also Matt. 12:3-6)

Comment:

"When in flight from Saul, David had eaten of the shewbread. * * * Jewish tradition vindicated his conduct on the plea that 'danger to life superseded the Sabbath-Law' and hence, all laws connected with it. * * * In truth the reason why David was blameless in eating the shewbread was the same as that which made the Sabbath-labor of priests lawful. The Sabbath-Law was not one merely of rest, but of rest for worship. * * * The priest worked on the Sabbath, because this service was the object of the Sabbath, and David was allowed to eat of the shewbread, not because there was danger to life from starvation, but because he pleaded that he was in the service of the Lord and needed this provision. The disciples, when following the Lord, were similarly on the service of the Lord; ministering to Him was more than ministering in the Temple, for He was greater than the Temple. If the Pharisees had believed this they would not have questioned their conduct." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 58)

b. "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

Comment:

This statement was plain to the Rabbis, for they had a saying very much like it—"the Sabbath is handed over to you; not yet handed over to the Sabbath." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 58)

c. "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." (Mark 2:28)

Comment:

"The service of God, and the service of the Temple by universal consent superseded the Sabbath-Law. But Christ was greater than the Temple, and His service more truly that of God * * * and the Sabbath was intended for man, to serve God; therefore Christ and His service were superior to the Sabbath-Law. Thus much would be intelligible to these Pharisees, although they would not receive it, because they believed not on Him as the Sent of God." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 58)

C.–Healing the man with the withered arm.

1. "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand." (Mark 3:1)
2. The Pharisees watched Jesus to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. Christ perceived their thoughts.

Comment:

It is now clear to us that the Rabbis admitted and taught the principle that it was lawful on the Sabbath to do that which would save life or prevent death. To return for a moment to their own customs, let us refer you to the following: They considered it lawful to attend to infections extending from the lips into the throat, because there was danger to life. External lesions might be treated because dangerous to life. Similarly, if a person had swallowed a piece of glass, medical aid could be secured. It was lawful to remove a splinter from the eye, or even a thorn from the flesh.

3. "And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him." (Matt. 12:10)
4. His answer.
   a. "And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" (Matt. 12:11)

Comment:

This argument they could not gainsay, for their own Talmud discussed cases in which it was lawful to lift an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath or else lower food and drink to it. (Shabb. 117b)

   b. He added: "How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." (Matt. 12:12)
   c. "Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." (Matt. 12:13)
5. The effect upon the Pharisees.
   "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." (Mark 3:6)
6. "But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea." (Mark 3:7)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Christ and the man at the pool of Bethesda.

1. What was the incident that occurred at the Pool of Bethesda?
2. Why did the Pharisees challenge the man when he picked up his bed and walked away?
3. Later in the Temple, what warning did Jesus give the man?
4. Why were the Pharisees angry at Christ when the man told them who it was that had healed him?
5. What was the Jewish custom of caring for the sick on the Sabbath? What determined how much they could do for such a person?
6. Would it not have been better had Jesus waited until some other day to heal the man?
7. What further sin did they accuse Jesus of when He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work?"
8. Why did they think this a sin?
9. Was it sinful?

B.–Christ and His disciples walked through the corn field.

1. According to the custom of the Rabbis, what laws did they break when they gathered heads of grain on the Sabbath?
2. What was Christ's answer to them?
3. Explain the soundness of His answer according to the Jewish custom to which He referred.
4. For whom did Jesus say that the Sabbath was instituted?
5. State the passage in the Talmud which was somewhat like the one Jesus gave.
6. What did Jesus mean when He said, "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath?"

C.–Jesus and the man with the withered hand.

1. Give the setting of the incident.
2. Where there was no immediate danger of loss

of life, what did the Rabbis say should be done about healing on the Sabbath?

3. Name some of the things which could be done in case of danger to life.
4. Why did they ask Jesus if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath?
5. What was Christ's answer? See Matt. 12:11.
6. Compare His answer with the statement from the Talmud.
7. When He healed the man what did the Pharisees do?
8. What did Jesus say was lawful to do on the Sabbath?

D.–General.

1. Judging from the above incidents, on what principles did Jesus depend in order to decide what to do and what not to do on the Sabbath?
2. What would you say was the essential difference between His Sabbath day standard of conduct and that of the Rabbis?
3. Do you feel that Jesus was justified in not conforming to their Sabbath customs? Why?
4. Is it a good thing to have a Sabbath? Why?
5. What things which you do on the week days do you feel it wrong to do on the Sabbath?
6. How do you decide what is right and what is wrong to do on the Sabbath?
7. How is the Sabbath sometimes perverted nowadays?
8. Do you feel justified in attending picture shows or hiking in the mountains on the Sabbath?
9. Did Jesus violate the real spirit of the Sabbath?
10. Why was the Sabbath given to man? Do you think it is a means to an end, or an end in itself?
11. How far should custom determine our Sabbath observance?

YOU MAY COUNT THAT DAY

If you sit down at the set of sun
And count the acts that you have done
    And counting find
One self-denying deed, one word
That eased the heart of him that heard;
    One glance most kind,
That fell like sunshine where it went—
Then you may count that day well spent.

But if, through all the livelong day,
You've cheered no heart, by yea or nay—
    If, through it all,
You've nothing done that you can trace
That brought the sunshine to one face—
    No act most small
That helped some soul and nothing cost—
Then count that day as worse than lost.

—*George Eliot.*

PROBLEM 24

CALL OF THE APOSTLES

The popularity of Jesus had by this time spread widely throughout Palestine. In Mark 3:7-8 we read:

"But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

"And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him."

The time had arrived for Jesus to approach the Kingdom with a more definite organization.

PROBLEM: Whom did Jesus call to be His first Apostles; and for what purpose were they chosen?

Bible References: Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Call of the Twelve.

1. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12)

Comment:

Throughout the three years of His ministry, when great problems faced Jesus, when He was bowed down with grief, when tremendous temptations tried Him, when important duties faced Him, then it was that He went away alone with God to pray. He was not disappointed. The Father looked down with willing heart and sent to a deserving Son the necessary blessings. He spoke that which He knew when He said:

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:6)

2. He was facing a great problem, that of beginning the definite organization for the Kingdom of God on earth. How should He proceed? What were the necessary steps? How could He best secure help?
3. Returning from prayer He ordained His Apostles.
   a. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." (Luke 6:13)
   b. Mark adds an enlightening statement: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." (Mark 3:14-15)

Comment:

This call of the Twelve Apostles was unique in history. Out of that night of prayer came new inspiration, and what was wrought has changed the history of the world.

It is important to note the words, "And he ordained twelve" (Mark 3:14). This call differed from the previous ones. He was now about to send them forth to preach. Well did He realize that they needed authority, both for their own confidence and for that of the people: "For there was no principle more firmly established by universal consent than that authoritative teaching required previous authorization. * * * All teaching must be authoritative, since it was traditional—approved by authority, and handed down from teacher to disciple. * * * The ultimate appeal in cases of discussion was always to some great authority, whether an individual Teacher or a Decree by the Sanhedrin. * * * But authoritatively to teach required other warrant. In fact, there was regular ordination (Semikhah) to the office of Rabbi, Elder, and Judge. * * * Although we have no description of the earliest mode of ordination the very name—Semikhah—implies the imposition of hands." (Edersheim, Vol. II, pp. 381-382)

No Rabbi would have ventured at the time of Christ to teach without proper Rabbinical authorization. As

we proceed through the life of Christ we shall see that the question of Christ's authority was a sore problem with the Rabbis. Of course, He made no claim to traditional Rabbinical authority, but always referred to His anointment and call by His Father.
What would be the situation today if a person presumed to preach and teach without authority?

4. Reasons for choosing Apostles.
   a. Mark says He chose them "that they should be with him."

Comment:

Opposition had by this time assumed considerable proportions. Christ felt strongly the need for friendship. He enjoyed the companionship of men and needed their association.

   b. Again, Mark says that He chose them "that he might send them forth to preach."

Comment:

Multitudes were flocking to Jesus. He could not do alone all the work which now bore down upon Him. Others must be called into the field.

   c. There was, no doubt, a more or less hidden reason for His choosing them. If His work was to abide, He must with great care train the disciples for the task. Actual experience in the field would sanctify His teachings. If they failed Him finally, to whom could He turn? If they could not understand His message, what hope was there for others? Great storm clouds were ahead. Men strong in faith and brave in heart must get the spirit of His message; for upon them His Cause depended. It was for them to carry on.

5. Whom did He choose?
   a. Simon he surnamed Peter. b. James, son of Zebedee. c. John, brother of James. d. Andrew, brother of Peter. e. Philip. f. Barthol-

omew. g. Matthew. h. Thomas. i. James, son of Alphaeus. j. Thaddeus. k. Simon, the Zealot. l. Judas Iscariot.

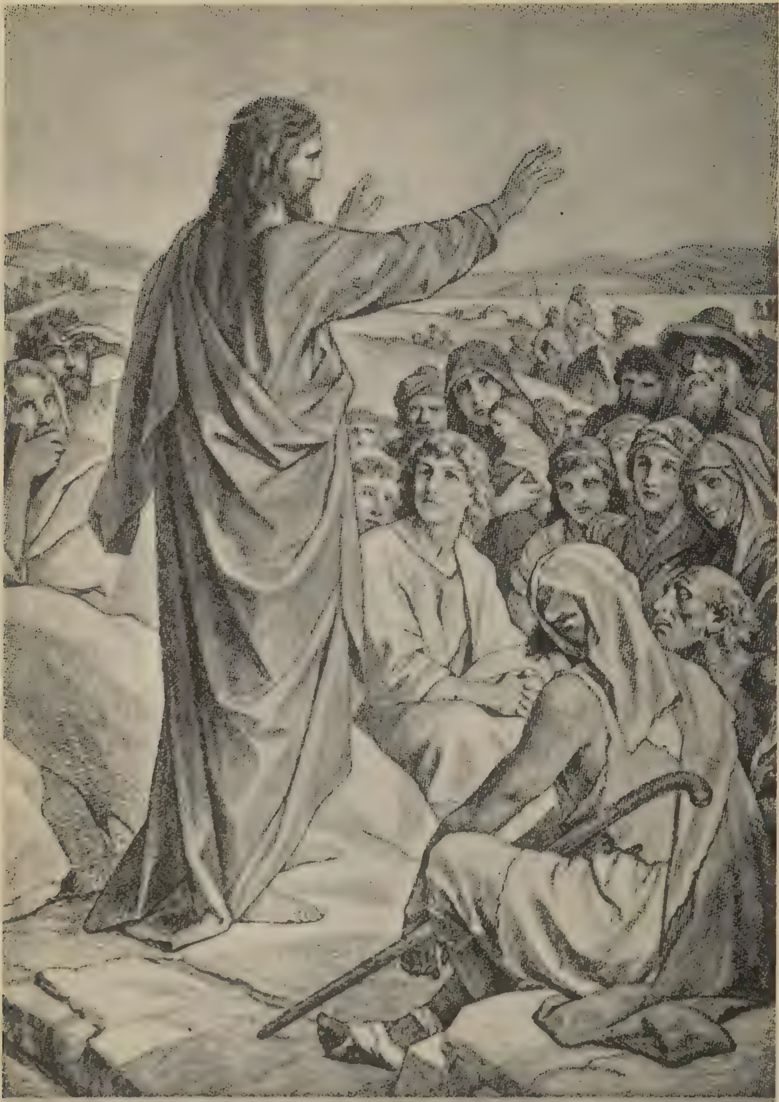
All of these men but Judas were finally able to withstand the destructive forces of misunderstanding and fanaticism, though at times they too trembled and wavered. It was upon Peter, James, and John that Jesus seemed to rely most. These three He took with Him at the time of His Transfiguration. In the Garden of Gethsemane, during His great agony, these three went with Him and remained near while He prayed.

The above twelve men were to be His companions, His pupils, and His co-workers. They formed the nucleus of the Kingdom. The record of their word directed by the Great Master has come down to us as one of the most precious heritages of all time.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus.

1. What did Jesus usually do when He faced a great problem?
2. Before He chose His Apostles He went at night into a mountain. What was His purpose?
3. When morning came He knew what to do. What was it? (Luke 6:13)
4. After He had selected the twelve men He ordained them "that he might send them forth to preach," and that they might be with Him. What was the general custom of granting authority to teach, and what likely was the method of ordination He used?
5. Give three important reasons why He chose the Twelve.
6. Who were the twelve men whom He chose? Name them.
7. Why was this occasion fraught with great importance?



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SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

PROBLEM 25

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In Problem 17, "In what significant way did Jesus begin His ministry?" we quoted this statement: "Both the acts and words of Jesus made a strong impression. * * * Acts and words alike implied a claim of authority different in kind from that of the most respected Rabbis."

Again, according to the words which Christ read in the Synagogue at Nazareth (Problem 16), His ministry had a two-fold aspect: (1) that of works of mercy and love, and (2) that of preaching the gospel to the poor. After discussing the first briefly we made the following statement: "We have not emphasized His teachings, for we expect to do that when we consider His Sermon on the Mount." We now set ourselves to this problem.

PROBLEM: According to the Sermon on the Mount, what was Christ's ethical and religious standard of life?

Bible References: Luke 6:20-49; Matt. ch. 5, 6, 7.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–General information about the Sermon.

1. "This sermon (Matt. ch. 5, 6, 7) is so similar to the sermon reported by St. Luke (6:20-49), that it is best to regard them as identically the same. It is true that it has been plausibly suggested that our Lord during His preaching tours often repeated nearly the same sermon to different audiences, and that St. Matthew has given us the sermon as delivered at one place and St. Luke as delivered at another; but the resemblances are so extremely close, and the divergencies for the most part so naturally accounted for, that to re-

gard them as identical is more natural." (George A. Barton, "Jesus of Nazareth," p. 170)

"St. Luke gives the sermon as our Lord actually delivered it, and St. Matthew has inserted at appropriate places in the sermon other utterances of our Lord dealing with the same or similar subjects. In a literal sense, therefore, St. Luke's report is, speaking generally, the more trustworthy, but St. Matthew's is the more valuable as containing numerous authoritative explanations of its meaning." (Dummelow's "One-Volume Bible Commentary," p. 336)

2. Matthew collected the sayings of Jesus and placed them at the beginning of His Galilean ministry no doubt to give a general idea of Christ's teachings. There can be little question, however, but that the Sermon was not delivered until after the call of the Twelve Apostles. We shall follow St. Matthew's account in our discussion.
3. The burden of the message of John was to call people to repentance as a preparation for the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. It was Christ's burden to teach people how to live and associate with one another in the Kingdom.

"The sermon is very important for a right understanding of Christ's conception of 'the kingdom'. It is 'the kingdom of the heavens'. * * * This blessed life of sinless perfection Christ brings down to earth in His own person, and makes available for man. Every baptized Christian is taught to pray, 'Thy kingdom come'; and that is interpreted to mean, Let Thy will be done by men on earth as it is by angels and saints in heaven. The kingdom, then, is just the heavenly life brought down to earth." (Dummelow, p. 637)

The theme of the Sermon, therefore, is this: right standards of living for worthy membership in His Kingdom on earth. Christ identified His group of officers and disciples with the Kingdom, for it was the divinely appointed means of establishing it. (See Dummelow, p. 637)

4. There is considerable difference of opinion as to the location of the mount from which the Sermon was delivered. The traditional site is the Horns of Hattin. This is a low, quadrangularly-shaped hill about seven miles southwest of Capernaum. Edersheim (p. 524) questions this location and says: "It was probably on one of those mountain-ranges, which stretch to the north of Capernaum, that Jesus had spent the night of lonely prayer." No great importance need be given the location. It is, however, interesting that as Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai, so now Jesus gave His Law from the Mount of Beatitudes.

B.–The Beatitudes considered.

1. The Beatitudes. (Matt. 5:3-12)
   - a. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
   - b. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."
   - c. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."
   - d. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."
   - e. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
   - f. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
   - g. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

h. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

i. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

2. The elements of true character.

a. What is the meaning of the phrase "poor in spirit"? These are people who feel themselves spiritually dependent upon Christ. Their condition is the opposite of pride, self-righteousness, and self-conceit.

The Rabbinical parallel to this beatitude reads: "Ever be more and more lowly in spirit, since the expectancy of man is to become the food of worms." Christ turns the idea to one of optimism, and declares this quality of humility to be of such ~~sublime nature as to~~ warrant its possessor entrance ~~into~~ the Kingdom of Heaven. But it not only rests so in religious matters. Humility is the key which permits entrance to science, business, research, and success in life.

b. *Beatitude* concerning mourning.

"The Rabbinic blessedness of mourning consists in this, that much misery here makes up for punishment hereafter." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 534) But Christ made mourning a dynamic force in the lives of men. Sorrows, if received "with humility and submisson, ever refine and ennoble the character and elevate it into closer union with the Father." (Dummelow, p. 639) Those who mourn on account of sin, with a godly sorrow, have already stepped into the pathway of repentance. For such, forgiveness lifts the burden of sin and brings comfort and peace to hallow the new life. Those who mourn with others are sure to grow in understanding, and understanding grows into sympathy, and sympathy into love. Thus Christ lifts mourning above misery and suffering, and through it promises to man a blessed condition of comfort of soul. So understood, it is not a principle that crushes, but one that elevates.

c. *Beatitude* of meekness.

To be meek means to be mild, gentle, not easily provoked, and forbearing. This beatitude, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," is really a promise and a prophecy that meekness will prove a greater power in the world than pride. It was quite customary at the time of Christ to look upon meekness as a quality of inferiority and weakness. Are we sometimes likewise deceived? "Judaism meant pride of race and privilege; Rabbinism, pride of learning; Roman imperialism, pride of power; Greek culture, either pride of intellect or pride of external magnificence. All agreed that the meek man was a poor creature and the worldly world thinks so still." (Dummelow, p. 640) But Jesus saw greatness in this quality. It is not a weak quality but an heroic one. It is self-control at its highest. "Meekness, then, let us be sure, is no milk and water virtue, and still less a superfluous virtue. It is a root-virtue, and essential to the strong man." (King, "Ethics of Jesus," p. 209)

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32)

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." (Luke 1:52)

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:4)

So Christ dignified forever the quality of meekness, recognizing an heroic power therein which, if exerted, would dethrone all pride and haughtiness. To the meek, then, His promise was that they should inherit the earth. The meek are willing to listen, willing to learn. Their minds are open to new light. Thus in reality they inherit the accumulated wisdom of the past.

d. *Beatitude* to "hunger" and "thirst".

We could not "expect any (Rabbinic) parallel to the fourth Beatitude, to those who 'hunger' and 'thirst' after righteousness. Rabbinism would have quite a different idea of righteousness considered as 'good works' and chiefly as almsgiving. To such, a special reward is promised. * * * But such a conception as that of 'hunger' and 'thirst' after righteousness would have no place in the system. And, that no doubt may obtain, this sentence may be quoted: 'He that says I give this "Sela" as alms, in order that my sons may live, and that I may inherit the world to come, behold, this is the perfectly righteous.' " (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 534)

Hunger and thirst are two of the most fundamental motives or organic needs in life. These motives are sometimes spoken of as "drives" or the mainsprings to human action. These are directive forces telling us what to do, what is needed by the body. We all know how persistent these "drives" are, how hunger directs us to the kitchen and thirst to the fountain. Jesus knew these basic drives. Blessed is the person who "hungers" and "thirsts" for goodness, for character, for righteousness; for these "drives" would persistently urge him on to their accomplishment. "The goal is complete integrity of character." (King) And the promise is that whosoever complies shall be filled—filled with those qualities which are the natural results of the specific efforts put forth.

May we not even go further and apply this great principle to our righteous ambitions and hopes in life for which we really hunger? In school work that student who hungers for knowledge and intellectual development and power to do, is the one who, as a graduate, is filled; and that person who hungers for richness of character receives life abundant.

e. The Beatitudes which follow are social in their nature. One who possesses the qualities inherent in the first four of the Beatitudes will naturally desire to see the highest righteousness obtain in society. The merciful will show mercy and sympathy. This is not mere pity. Sympathy is a positive quality and grows best with understanding. Purity of heart becomes "the strongest of all human motives to self-control * * * it demands the highest righteousness in that relation that lies at the very basis of society." (King) The individual who possesses the foregoing qualities, both personal and social, can do no less than aim to secure for others his own richness of life. He promotes, therefore, peace and love toward all. "And finally, he who is in earnest in promoting the reign of peace and love among men must be prepared to sacrifice for men—to face suffering and persecution. And this sacrificial love includes all the qualities that have preceded, and builds upon them, and is itself their climax and final glorification. We know of nothing higher than a courageous, suffering, sacrificial love." (King, p. 215) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

C.–Christ's clear vision.

1. Thus the "clearest seer of the spiritual life that the world has ever known, definitely sets forth in the Beatitudes what He regards as the really basic qualities of life: Just here is the secret of character, of happiness, of influence." (King, p. 206) "The Mount of Beatitudes has become to all the chief nations of the world what Sinai was to Israel, the place where an authoritative moral code, and what is more than a code, an authoritative moral ideal was promulgated." (Dummelow, p. 637)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–General information.

1. What is likely the best way to regard the record of the Sermon on the Mount as found in St. Matthew and in St. Luke?
2. Before what important incident was the Sermon most likely given?
3. In general, what is the theme of the Sermon?
4. What is the relation of qualities of character and God's Kingdom on earth?

B.–The Beatitudes considered.

1. Which of the Beatitudes are for the individual, and which ones pertain to society?

2. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"?
3. In what way can mourning bless and not crush?
4. Why is the quality of meekness considered an heroic and strong quality of character?
5. What relation do you see between hungering and thirsting for righteousness and progress toward life abundant?
6. Why is mercy important?
7. What relation exists between purity of heart and self-control?
8. If one possesses the preceding qualities, what will be one's attitude toward the hatred and contention in the world?
9. Which is the crowning principle of all?
10. Was Jesus able to do all these things?

C.–Christ's clear vision.

1. In summary, what is your conclusion concerning Christ and His power to evaluate greatness properly?

PROBLEM 26

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(*Continued*)

PROBLEM: What was to be the relation of Christ's Apostles to the world?

Bible Reference: Matt. 5:13-16.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Apostles' qualities.

1. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? * * * "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

   "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-14, 16)

Comment:

Salt is essential for the life of man and of beast. In Russia cattle travel long distances to gain access to the salt licks. Every farmer boy knows how essential it is for cattle owners and shepherds to place salt in pastures and over the mountain ranges for the animals. Perfect growth cannot be secured without it, nor can perfect health be maintained. Again, salt is a preservative, and will keep food for long periods of time. We are all acquainted with the saltiness of tears, a condition which protects the eyes and keeps them sanitary.

The story is told that during the World War some soldiers, having been severely wounded and believing their ship sinking, jumped overboard into the ocean. They were later rescued. To the surprise of the doctors their wounds healed more quickly and more perfectly than did those of the men who had not jumped into the water. The salt of the sea water had saved them.

So Christ thought of His Apostles as salt that draws men to it, that maintains and preserves and gives flavor to life, not organically, but spiritually. How well men have thus been aided the past two thousand years testify. They have been a light unto the world, and still are; for millions through them and their records have been brought to Jesus. Their teachings, with His, have lighted mankind with the greatest vision of life that the world has ever known. And all this that the Father might in the end be glorified in man.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Apostles' qualities.

1. Unto what did Jesus liken His Apostles?
2. What positive thing were they to do?
3. How can one attempt to let his light shine and still be meek and humble?
4. What are four of the benefits to life coming from salt?
5. Apply Christ's parable to its spiritual meaning.
6. How well did the Apostles follow His teaching?
7. Did they become great of themselves, or did He raise them to greatness because of their faith in Him?

PROBLEM 27

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(*Continued*)

PROBLEM: What kind of conduct did Jesus expect from His Apostles with respect to retaliation and resistance to personal wrongs?

Bible Reference: Matt. 5:38-41.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–How to resist personal wrongs.

1. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (Matt. 5:38)

Comment:

This was the law of Moses known as one of the carnal commandments. It was a law of revenge. It was the opposite of love. Under this law how far could a man go in getting even for any wrong done him?

2. Jesus' method of retaliation.

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (Matt. 5:39-41)

Note: A splendid little book to read on this question is "The Second Mile," by Harry Emerson Fosdick. No teacher should fail to read this.

Comment:

It is somewhat hard for us to understand a law of revenge, for it seems so barbarous. Yet when it was given it represented a far-reaching moral reform. "The thirst for vengeance is not naturally satisfied with an eye for an eye; it goes on to demand life. Hence when Moses allowed the injured man to exact an eye and no more, he was imposing a salutary check on private vengeance. Our Lord goes farther, and forbids private vengeance altogether." (Dummelow, p. 643)

In the margin of the Revised Version the word "impress" is suggested for "compel." It is thought that Christ referred, in His statement of the second mile, to the custom then prevailing by which the Roman troops, when passing through a district, made the people carry their baggage. "The compulsory transport was a recognized form of taxation, and is probably what is alluded to here." (Dummelow, p. 643) The Persians, too, gave power to the royal couriers of the Empire to "impress" men and beasts for the king's service. The custom was evoked in the case of Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to carry the Cross of Jesus while on the way to Calvary.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–How to resist personal wrongs.

1. According to Christ's standard what should be done in place of retaliation ?
2. If a person tells untruths about us and injures our reputation, what should we do?
3. If one injures us intentionally, what should we do?
4. According to present-day standards of law and custom, how far can one go to get redress for wrongs done?
5. Is lack of retaliation an indication of weakness or of strength? Why?
6. Do you think that the above teachings of Jesus are possible of application, or impracticable? Why?
7. How effective is retaliation in righting a wrong?
8. What would you suggest as the best way to permanently right, as far as possible, a wrong?

PROBLEM 28

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(Continued)

PROBLEM: What were Christ's teachings concerning three of the most serious personal and social evils: (1) murder, (2) adultery, (3) divorce?

Bible Reference: Matt. 5:21-32.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–His teaching concerning murder.

1. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (vain fellow), shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Gehenna)." (Matt. 5:21-22)

Comment:

The law, as taught by the Scribes, punished only the act of murder. Christ even condemned the emotion of anger when it was prompted by the spirit of revenge. He did not refer to them as being subject to the final judgment, but to the judgment of the local courts consisting of seven men. The council (Sanhedrin) should deal with those who used the expression "Raca". The more abusive term "fool" was worthy of Gehenna. Thus "Jesus goes below the act to the state of heart and condemns anger and contempt more strongly than the Scribes had condemned murder itself." (Burton and Mathews, p. 103)

2. No religious acts are acceptable so long as hate and anger for a brother remain in the heart. "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. 5:23-24)

Comment:

Jesus assumed here that murder is the outcome of anger. In our day carelessness and greed and selfishness play an important part in crushing out the lives of men. This has sometimes been true in industry. It has been true in selfish exploitation. It is true with careless and intoxicated drivers. There is an encouraging outlook, however, for thoughtful people all over our land are reacting and they desire improvement. If they "hunger" and "thirst" for this, they shall "be filled."

B.–His teaching concerning adultery.

1. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shall not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27-28)

Comment:

Almost the same principles which Christ applied to the subject of murder were applied also in the case of adultery. "Not the act only but the cherishing of unlawful desire is wrong."

C.–His teaching concerning divorce.

1. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and who-

soever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." (Matt. 5:31-32)

2. During His ministry the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him:
"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.
"And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?
"And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.
"And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept:
"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;
"And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.
"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark 10:2-9)

Comment:

The question of divorce, prominent in the days of Christ, has become in our day a world problem. In His day women did not have very much to say about divorce. In some countries all the man had to do to put away his ~~wife was to say three time, "I divorce you! I divorce~~ you! I divorce you!" The woman had no right of choice. But as the years have passed the status of women has grown better. In modern times she has been admitted into institutions of learning, into business and economic fields, and finally to the franchise equal to that enjoyed by men. Thus women have secured rights and privileges which have brought them independence and protection by the law.

During this development the divorce rate has probably increased. In the United States the condition is alarming. In some states annually there are nearly as many divorces granted as there are marriages performed.

There is no general standard. Each state has its own laws both for divorce and for regulation of marriage. Persons who can not secure a divorce in one state may go into another and by a few months' residence therein accomplish it. Again, each year Americans travel to Paris where easy divorce proceedings are secured. The causes of divorce are many. We list a few of them:

1. Hasty marriages.
2. Incompatibility.
3. Infidelity.
4. Selfishness.
5. Lack of support.
6. Cruelty, etc.

In the olden days men put away their wives; but now in the United States the majority of divorces are secured by women.

If the great qualities of character which Jesus laid down in the Beatitudes were in effect in the lives of men, these vices mentioned in this problem would not exist.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Murder.

1. The Law of Moses forbade murder. How did Christ's teaching differ from this?
2. The Law condemned the act. Jesus condemned what?
3. What relationship did He point out between anger and religious sacrifice?
4. If we should apply the same principle to our partaking of the Sacrament, what would be the result?

B.–Adultery.

1. One of the social Beatitudes is: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." If people lived this principle, what effect would it have upon the status of adultery in the world?

C.–Divorce.

1. Should society permit divorce in families where there are children? Give reasons.

2. What relation exists between the present status of women and the divorce problem?
3. Is divorce an evil in itself, or more of a symptom of deeper immoral practices?
4. Would you have divorce abolished entirely? Why?
5. May we stop divorce by legislation?
6. What is the status of divorce in America?
7. Make a list of the causes of divorce.
8. Make a list of important safeguards against divorce.
9. What Christian principles, if adhered to, will secure permanency of the marriage covenant?
10. What was Christ's attitude toward divorce?

Problem 29

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(*Continued*)

Problem: What standard of conduct did Jesus require with respect to one's neighbor and one's enemies?

Bible References: Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:27, 28, 35.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus adds to the old law.

1. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." (Matt. 5:43)

Comment:

The maxim, "Thou shalt love thy neigbour," is found in Lev. 19:18. The words "thou shalt hate thine enemy" are nowhere found in the Pentateuch, which indeed contains isolated texts of an opposite tendency. See Leviticus 19:17, 18 and Proverbs 24:28, 29. However, we read in Psalm 109 a prayer of vengeance against an enemy. It can be quite certain that Jesus was not referring to the teaching in the Pentateuch so much as to the teachings of the Scribes and Rabbis. It was against their dogmas that Jesus directed His criticism.

2. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44)

Comment:

This is the central principle of Christ's teaching. It enjoins love of fellow man, both the just and the unjust. It does not ask for approval of the acts of our enemies, but does require that in return for evil we do good.

3. Why did He want His disciples to do this?

    a. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45)

B.–The teachings of the Rabbinic school.
  1. The teachings of the Rabbinic school to love one's neighbor did not require much effort nor character.
    a. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. 5:46, 47)

Comment:

It is not demanded that we love our enemies with a natural and spontaneous affection, but with the supernatural Christian love that comes by grace. It is the kind of love which Christ Himself showed while the soldiers were driving home the cruel nails, when He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Thus, as cruel death was closing in to pluck the flower of glorious manhood, Jesus sanctified His teaching by a hallowed example and accepted death with a prayer for his enemies.

II.–Organization of Material.
  A.–Jesus adds to the old law.
    1. What was the evident teaching of the Rabbis concerning the principle of love?
    2. What did Jesus add to their teaching of love of neighbor?
    3. Compared with other principles, how should we rank this principle?
    4. Why did Jesus require love of this kind? (Read Luke 6:27-36)
    5. Would this ideal work in business, where a

competitor had given you a "dirty deal" and you had a chance to "get even"? Why?

6. How far can the standards of Jesus be followed between nations in their treaties and peace terms? (See Kirby Page, "Jesus Versus Christianity," final chapter)
7. If a person deliberately set to work to destroy one's reputation, what would Christ's standard require of the injured?
8. Are you able to do good to a person who hates you?
9. Briefly describe the condition which would prevail in a neghborhood if Christ's principle of love could be lived for a day.
10. Do you know of persons today who you think live this principle?
11. What is mother's attitude when a child thoughtlessly pains her by disobedience?
12. What reason have you for believing that Jesus was able to follow His own teachings of love?
13. Since this principle of love obtains in the Kingdom of God, would you be ready to live therein should it be established now?
14. How may one learn to love and bless those who hate him?
15. Does it show weakness or strength to return love for hate or evil?
16. If you hate a person, and he pays no attention to it but does good to you, how do you feel?

We have tried to make it clear that the crowning power of the Beatitudes is sacrificial love. Jesus taught that with such principles applied in life it would be possible even to do good for an enemy. We cannot love, however, while we hate, neither can we do good to those we hurt. We can reverse the process and do good to those who hurt us and desiptefully use us.

Problem 30

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

(*Continued*)

We have already noticed that Jesus was an apt student and a keen observer. Early in life He must have seen the artificiality of the system of religion which guided the Jews in their various religious duties. How they did things by rote, how they followed custom blindly, how they lived the "letter of the law," and forgot the spirit thereof. (See lesson on the Sabbath) To such as were sincere He must have longed to teach the way of life. But there were those who performed the most sacred duties with a spirit of ostentation and for selfish purposes. In the common language of our day they were "bluffers". He looked into the lives of such and read therein hypocrisy. Jesus must have been displeased with the acts of such people. He was so affected by it that He could not refrain from offering constructive criticism thereof.

Problem: What standard did Jesus expect with respect to (1) giving alms, (2) fasting?

Bible Reference: Matt. 6:1-18.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ's standard in alms-giving.

1. When opportunity afforded, Jesus hastened to let the people know that such religious acts as fasting and giving alms did not necessarily prove men to be religious. He saw that the wrong purpose in doing these things might vitiate the acts in such a manner as to make them hypocritical and therefore blameworthy, devoid of recognition from heaven.

2. On the other hand, they were of such importance that God the Father would be pleased to reward those who observed them, provided they were done in the proper spirit.
3. "Take heed," said He, "that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." (Matt. 6:1-3)

Comment:

"In a Jewish community alms were given publicly in three ways. (1) Every day three men went round with a basket collecting alms for 'the poor of the world', i. e., Jews and Gentiles alike. (2) Two synagogue officials went from house to house collecting alms for 'the poor man's chest'. This was for Jews alone. (3) On the Sabbath day alms were collected in the synagogue itself." (Dummelow, p. 645)

The best Jewish thought strongly approved of alms done in secret. But there were many who desired the amounts given to be published. This practice resulted in ostentation and rivalry, which was displeasing to Christ.

B.–His attitude toward fasting.

1. "Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (Matt. 6:16)

Comment:

"In our Lord's time there were not more than five (or six) public fasts, but the strict Jews, especially the

Pharisees, were accustomed to fast also on Thursday (the day when Moses ascended Mount Sinai), and on Monday (the day when he came down). Vainglorious persons fasted more frequently even than this, and were careful to advertise the fact." (Dummelow, p. 647)

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.
"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican:
"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18: 10-14)

Comment:

It was a very common custom for those who fasted not to wash, or bathe, or shave. However, they placed ashes on their heads and thus disfigured their faces. In fact, "It was said, of a certain Rabbi Joshua, that all the days of his life his face was black by reason of his fasting." (Dummelow, p. 647)

2. Christ's advice about fasting.
"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:17, 18)
3. What is the purpose of fasting?
a. Fasting is accompanied by prayer. It serves

to subordinate the body to the spirit and prepare the soul for the more proper devotion.

b. Through fasting and prayer the sick are healed.
When Christ and His Apostles returned from the Transfiguration to the base of the mountain, and there found the son of a man whom the nine Apostles had failed to heal, they asked Him why they could not heal him. Then Jesus answered: "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:29)

c. When great problems faced Christ He always resorted to prayer for help. This is also true of most great men.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Alms-giving.

1. Why does a man who parades his good acts or boasts of his service receive contempt?
2. What, according to Jesus, was wrong with giving alms to be seen of men?
3. What effect does motive have in determining whether the act of giving alms is right or wrong?
4. Give examples of the right and wrong way of giving alms.

B.–Fasting.

1. How should one appear when fasting?
2. What custom of fasting prevailed among the Pharisees?
3. In what did the justification of the publican consist when he and the Pharisee were praying?
4. What was peculiar about Rabbi Joshua's fasting?
5. What did Jesus say to do when we fast?
6. What is the purpose of fasting?
7. Is it good to fast? Why?

Poem: *The Vision of Sir Launfal.*

PROBLEM 31

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(*Continued*)

One morning after Jesus had been praying, a disciple of His said: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)

PROBLEM: What is the right way to pray?

Bible References: Luke 11:1-4; Matt. 6:5-13.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ's way of prayer, as found in Luke.

1. In answer to the question of His disciples, Christ said: "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." (Luke 11:1-4)

Comment:

To the Jew saying prayers was considered one of the three most essential forms of worship. Christ's Apostles were religious men, and must have said prayers often. But they evidently did not know how to pray.

To illustrate: Every one was "required to recite daily eighteen set prayers of considerable length, or, if hindered by the rush of business, they were to say a summary of these. Again, the Rabbis added to these prayers some composed by themselves, and taught their pupils to say them." (Dummelow, p. 645)

Furthermore, there were the prayers of the phylacteries which had to be said at fixed times and with much ceremony. The workman, at the stated time, put down his tools, the traveler halted his caravan, the gleaner stopped his gleaning, the man in the street and public place remained standing. No matter what they were doing or where they were when this hour of prayer came each turned his face toward Jerusalem and stood, with bowed head, in prayer.

"Many people were careful to be overtaken by the prayer hour in public places, and to remain longer praying than anyone else. During the synagogue services those who wished to be thought devout did not follow the public prayers, but said private self-righteous prayers of their own, loud enough to be heard and to attract the attention of the congregation. In the streets the same people would sometimes stand for three hours at a time in the attitude of prayer." (Dummelow, p. 645)

Thus it was that the Jews said prayers often, yet knew not how to pray. Christ's way was different. His disciples had noted this. So came the request, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Many think that the Lord's Prayer was given twice; once as recorded by Luke, and once as given by Matthew. "But it is more probable that it was given only once, viz., on the occasion mentioned by St. Luke, and that St. Matthew has purposely placed it earlier, inserting it in our Lord's first recorded sermon in order to set before the reader at once a comprehensive view of His teaching about prayer. As to the form of the prayer, St. Matthew's version is, without doubt, to be preferred." (Dummelow, p. 645)

B. -Christ mentioned the wrong way to pray.

1. Jesus had noted how the Jews prayed. He was well acquainted with the improper uses to which saying prayers had been put. So He said:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." (Matt. 6:5-8)

Comment:

In I Kings 18:26 we read: "And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered."

Although Jesus did not, in His reference, speak of the prayers of the Jews, yet He might have questioned the efficacy of eighteen prayers daily, together with many other prayers in the Temple and in the synagogue services.

"Vain repetition reaches its culmination point in Thibet, where there are mechanical prayer-wheels worked by the wind to spread out written petitions before the Almighty. * * * The idea that prayers prevail by their number rather than by their earnestness is pagan, and whenever it appears in Christianity is a corruption." (Dummelow, p. 645)

C.–Christ's way of prayer.

1. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matt. 6:9-13)

Comment:

We do not know just what Jesus expected concerning this prayer, whether He gave it as a set form to be memorized and repeated, or whether He gave it merely as a model or a pattern to be followed.

" 'The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles', which probably dates from the first century A. D., directs the Lord's Prayer to be said three times a day by all Christians. So jealously was its secrecy guarded in early times, that, like the Creed, it was only taught to catechumens just before their baptism, and was never used in those portions of public worship to which the heathen were admitted. It was always used at Holy Communion, where it formed the conclusion of the canon or prayer of consecration." (Dummelow, p. 645)

D.–The prayer considered in detail.

1. "Our Father which art in heaven"—
   a. In the Old Testament God is not addressed as Father. Israel believed Him to be the Father of their nation, but not of an individual. "It was Jesus who first made the fatherhood of God the basis of religion." (Dummelow, p. 646)
   b. Again, "Our Father" is significant because it suggests the brotherhood of man.
2. "Hallowed be thy name"—
   a. Prayers are too frequently only petitions for something we desire. But they ought first to be a form of worship. To hallow His name in worship requires reverence for His teachings, His commandments, His church, His authority, His people, His cause.
3. "Thy kingdom come"—
   a. You will remember that when John the Baptist came the burden of his message was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After Jesus was baptized He was virtually driven into the wilderness, confronted with the great problem of how to proceed to establish that Kingdom. At Nazareth when He read in the Synagogue that the Lord had anointed Him to preach and to set the captive free, He declared the spirit of His policy for establishing that Kingdom. It was therefore but natural that He should teach His disciples to pray for the Kingdom for which

He had been anointed and for which He was giving His life, and for which they would give theirs.

b. The Jews, whether His disciples or not, could use these words, "Thy kingdom come," in fervent prayer, for it was the cherished hope of their lives that a Messiah would come to establish God's Kingdom and save them from the yoke of tyranny. In fact, one of the maxims of the Rabbis was this: "That prayer, wherein is not mentioned the kingdom of God, is no prayer at all." (Dummelow, p. 646)

c. " 'Thy kingdom come' means, May justice triumph over injustice, truth over error, kindness over cruelty, purity over lust, peace over enmity. It is a prayer * * * for the growth in grace of its members, and for the conversion of the world." (Dummelow, p. 646)

d. However, it did not mean this to many of the Jews, for they expected a political kingdom in which they would be freed from the tyranny of the foreign yoke.

4. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"—

a. This prayer asks for the saintly life in heaven to be likewise the life on earth. May the will of the Lord prevail in all things. Notwithstanding the strong Messianic hope which prevailed among the Jews and directed largely the life of Israel, yet now that the Messiah had come, Israel could not sever itself from the traditional past and accept the Kingdom so that the will of God might prevail on earth.

b. Again, if the Lord's will is to *be done*, people must become active in doing it. Thus His prayer demands activity and living.

5. "Give us this day our daily bread"—

a. We pray here for the things we need such as food, clothing, and shelter. And more, we pray for bread for our soul and spirit, that we may be able, with stronger faith, to rely on Jesus and do His will.

6. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"—

   (Luke uses the word "sins" instead of "debts.")

   a. That forgiveness and grace which we ask for ourselves we pray shall we give to others. This is the prayer of the unselfish. It means that until we are willing to forgive, what need have we to ask for forgiveness. We ask no more for ourselves than we are willing to extend to others.

   b. Jesus knew how hard it would be to comply with this prayer aright, particularly for a people who had been brought up under the law of revenge: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and "Love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." How hard it would be for them to forgive the publican oppressor! How impossible to forgive the foreigner who required tribute! The very dust of the country defiled the Jew till evening.

   c. Is it not hard even today to forgive in others the things we are apt to do? The only means by which this prayer may be prayed aright was given by Christ a little earlier in His Sermon on the Mount: "Love thine enemy." Thus it becomes an active prayer, impossible of accomplishment without the spirit of the Beatitudes.

7. "And lead us not into temptation"—

   a. There has been and still is much difference of opinion regarding the meaning of this petition; for some maintain that God would not lead us into temptation. The meaning seems a little clearer if we read it thus: "And lead us, not into temptation."

   - b. "The temptations here referred to are not only the direct assaults of the evil one, but the trials and sorrows of life by which our souls are purified and refined as gold and silver are purged from their dross in a furnace. We pray here that we may not be tempted 'above that we are able' to bear." (Dummelow, p. 647)

  8. "But deliver us from evil"—
     - a. Most of the modern commentators have adopted the translation "evil one". It is a prayer for God to direct our path away from sin and wickedness. To such, the Kingdom of God would have already come.
  9. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"—
     - a. This phrase is likely of Jewish origin.

 E.–The Lord's Prayer is the way of life.
  1. Christ came to bring the Kingdom of God to man, and to teach him how to live. This prayer asks for such Kingdom to come, and petitions for help to live therein. It is a prayer for the thing for which He gave His life, and for which those who listened gave theirs. It is a prayer of action. To pray it rightly one must live much. (See Anthony C. Deane, "Our Father")

II.–Organization of Material.
 A.–The prayer in Luke's gospel.
  1. Who was it that presented the problem of how to pray?
  2. What reasons have we for believing that these disciples already knew how to say the prayers of the Jews?
  3. Why, then, did the disciple say, "Lord, teach us to pray"?

B.–Christ called attention to the wrong way of prayer.
  1. In what way was prayer used to attract attention?
  2. Why was it necessary for Him to correct the custom of vain repetition?
  3. Give an extreme case of vain repetition.

C.–Christ's way of prayer.
  1. Did Christ give His prayer as a set form or as a model to guide us?
  2. What custom developed early with respect to its use?

D.–The Lord's Prayer considered.
  1. What meaning is implied in "Our Father which art in heaven"?
  2. In what way should prayer be more than petitions?
  3. What is the meaning in the light of our previous problem of the phrase "Thy kingdom come"?
  4. What is significant about the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"?
  5. Explain: "Give us this day our daily bread."
  6. How does the petition, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," require a prayer of activity?
  7. What is the meaning of "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (the evil one) ?

E.–General.
  1. Summarize and give the general meaning of the Lord's Prayer.
  2. What distinguishes Christ's way of prayer?
  3. What conclusion have you formed about this prayer?
  4. Why should we pray at all?
  5. What kind of prayer is most acceptable and most helpful?

Problem 32

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
(*Continued*)

Problem: What further problems did Christ submit in His sermon?

Bible Reference: Matt. 6 and 7.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Putting first things first.

1. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matt. 6:19-20)
    a. Why?
        "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt 6:21)
        "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24)
2. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)

B.–"Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matt. 7:1)

1. Why?
    a. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. 7:2)
        Can you harmonize this statement with love, mercy, and grace, or is it the spirit of the old law: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"?

   b. We are too imperfect to judge. We must first cast out the beam in our own eye. (See Matt. 7:3-5)

C.–God knows how to give good gifts, if we will but ask. (See Matt. 7:7-11)

D.–The Golden Rule.

1. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12)

Comment:

It is evident here that Christ did not claim this as His own, but found it in the laws and the prophets. Neither is the idea original with Israel, for nearly all great teachers expressed similar ideas, though in different words and in a little different form. The Lord's Prayer is a petition for this same relationship to exist not only between man and man, but between God and man as well; for we ask God to forgive us as we forgive our debtors.

2. What would the Golden Rule mean if applied in the lives of men?

E.–What is the man like who does all these things?

1. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (Matt. 7:24-25)

F.–The effect of His Sermon on the people.

1. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine." (Matt. 7:28)

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave His great central conception of God, of life, and of man and his social relations. Christ's message, His method, His motives, His goal, are all made clear. The central idea of all is that God is our Father and that love brings the abundant life, which must be applied impartially to all; for we are a brotherhood, all children of God. In the Beatitudes He gave the basic elements of character, the development of which would lead to the highest good.

II.–Organization of Material.
  A.–Putting first things first.
    1. What treasures are best?
    2. Where should they be put?
    3. What is the danger of seeking worldly treasures first?
    4. What does Jesus say to seek first?
    5. What promise goes therewith?
    6. Can we seek wealth in a spirit which would make it acceptable to Jesus' standard?
  B.–Judge not.
    1. Why should we not judge?
    2. What qualities of character would help us to be less likely to judge?
    3. What qualities does one need to judge well, if at all?
    4. What should be the standard by which we deal with others?
  C.–General.
    1. To what is a man likened who does the things which Jesus taught in His Sermon?
    2. Summarize the fundamental principles taught therein.

PROBLEM 33

"ART THOU HE THAT SHOULD COME?"

After Christ had finished the Sermon on the Mount, He returned to Capernaum, where at the request of the centurian He healed his servant. (See Luke 7:1-10) The following day at the city of Nain he raised the widow's son. (See Luke 7:11-17) Then John sent his disciples with a question to Jesus.

PROBLEM: During periods of trouble and doubt shall our problems of life lead us away from Christ or to Him?

Bible Reference: Matt. 11:1-19.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–John's question.

1. "And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" (Luke 7:19)

Comment:

As previously referred to, John was now in prison, most likely in Herod's castle at Machaerus, a city of the east coast of the Dead Sea. John was evidently given some liberty, for he was able to meet with his own disciples. It is most certain that they had kept him informed concerning the progress of the work of Jesus. That they were unable to understand the things which Jesus did and were often displeased with Him, we cannot doubt. But this is natural, for they were still disciples of John, anxious for his welfare and jealous of his cause. They were familiar with the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus, and sometimes even united with them in such opposition. A case at hand is this: When Christ was at dinner at the home of Matthew Levi, "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" (Matt. 9:14)

These reports of his disciples only added fire to John's troubled soul. As John lay in his lonely prison cell, how could he have helped but recall the glory of his short life along the Jordan when thousands flocked to hear his words. And now, what a contrast! Devilish thoughts came unbidden to his mind. "Art thou he * * * or look we for another?" Was I in error when I bore record that He was the Son of God? Was my warning to the Pharisees right? "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." If so, how is it that Jesus remained inactive? Did I not say that He would "purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire?" Who needed purging more than the unscrupulous and immoral Herod? And yet here lay John in Herod's prison, while Jesus, the Messiah, permitted his tyranny.

The least that can be said is that the logic of the situation was against John. And thus it was that death-bitter doubts crept into his soul and dictated the thought: "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

B.–What work was Christ doing when the disciples of John arrived?

1. "And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight." (Luke 7:21)

C.–Christ's answer to John's question.

1. "Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Luke 7:22-23)

D.–Then Jesus turned to the people and said:

> "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messengers before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
>
> "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (Luke 7:27, 28)

Comment:

It is very likely that John had at first believed in the current concept of the Messiah, i. e., that He was coming to establish an actual kingdom of power on earth, a kingdom for Israel, in which, however, repentance and righteousness would be expected. Misunderstandings bring disappointments, and these are fraught with bitter doubts. But in His answer Jesus called John's attention to the true characteristic qualities of the work of the Messiah. Note how well it agrees with His duties as disclosed at Nazareth (Isaiah 61:1-2). And then He ended with a beatitude: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." It is virtually a prayer that John might understand and make proper soul adjustments.

Doubts and disappointments may kill like the serpent's sting, or they may guide the soul into the sunlight of a more abundant life. It depends on whether our problems lead us away from Christ or whether toward Him. Christ's beatitude to John had been well placed, for John already had presented his despair to Him around whom the conflict had gathered.

E.–Christ's example.

1. When crises and conflicts confronted Him, He went to His Father in Heaven for strength, for comfort, for courage.

F.–Our problems.

1. Amidst the great complexities of modern social life, problems and conflicts rush upon us from every angle. Temptations surround us on every hand, social adjustments present many difficulties, and our scientific age disturbs faith in tra-

ditional dogmas. The boys or girls who will forge ahead cannot side-step these conflicts. To do so would indicate an apathy of thought and action. But there is danger in the process. Some will lose faith in Christ and in man, some will fall victims of sin and, thus handicapped, will fight a losing battle. But others will be able to endure the conflicts of the body, of the soul, of the mind; and make of them stepping-stones to a greater faith and a more perfect life. Jesus understood the difficulties which beset the way of life, and with marvelously clear vision told people not only how to avoid difficulties, but how to progress in the midst of them. In summing up His teachings, He said: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (Matt. 7:24, 25) It matters much, therefore, whether we walk through life's perplexities alone, or whether we walk with Him.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–John presents his problem to Jesus.
1. What was John's question which he sent to Jesus by his disciples?
2. Why did not John present his own problem?
3. What was John's earlier testimony of Jesus?
4. Relate some of the things which the disciples of John might have told him concerning the progress of the work of Jesus.

B.–John's conflict of soul.
1. In his lonely cell what thought likely stole into John's mind?
2. How did John feel?

3. What do you like about John's way of solving his conflict of soul?

C.–Christ's answer.

1. What was Christ's answer to John's question?
2. Does it seem to you that the answer would help John to dispel his doubt?

E.–Christ's example.

1. What was Christ's way of gaining strength in crises?
2. Can you give instances where problems have led people in the wrong way?
3. Why would it not be a fine thing if all problems of doubt, of temptation, and of faith could be removed from experience?

F.–Our problems.

1. Upon what does our success or failure with moral problems depend?
2. What is the result of problems solved rightly?
3. In what direction shall we keep our face turned during solutions of life's problems? Why?

PROBLEM 34

"THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE"

In the previous lesson we learned that Christ considered John the Baptist as one of the greatest prophets who had ever lived. After He had made this statement, the Jews who had been baptized by John felt very proud. The Pharisees and the lawyers who had rejected John were displeased, not alone because of John, but the more so on account of Jesus.

"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

"They are like little children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

"For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

"The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

"But Wisdom is justified of all her children." (Luke 7:31-35)

It was difficult to please such men, for prejudice blinded them so that they were learning to see evil in good. This is a dangerous attitude and always results in faultfinding and in opposition.

One of the Pharisees was friendly with Jesus and invited Him to dinner. It was during this meal that an uninvited woman entered and provoked the problem of forgiveness.

PROBLEM: What was the effect of forgiveness as applied by Jesus?

Bible Reference: Luke 7:36-50.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ at dinner with a Pharisee.

1. "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

   "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

   "And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (Luke 7:36-38)

Comment:

The Mishnah sometimes describes the method of sitting at the table as "sitting down and leaning" around the table. Resting on a couch, the person would place the left elbow on the table and extend the feet away in the direction of the wall.

We would think it very strange today for a woman uninvited to enter a home at dinner time. But in the time of Christ it was customary for unbidden guests to enter the dining-room and watch while others ate.

Now it was not so much the presence of the woman that disturbed the Pharisees, as it was the fact that Jesus permitted her to anoint His feet and then spoke to her. The strict custom of the Rabbis forbade a man to speak to a woman. To accept adoration from such as she, whom they evidently knew as a sinner, was questionable.

It was customary for women to wear a flask of perfume hung around the neck. Sometimes the flask was of glass, but often it was of alabaster or silver or gold. "It seems at least not unlikely, that the alabastron which she brought, who loved so much, was none other than the 'flask of foliatum' so common among Jewish women." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 566)

2. The Pharisee began to question the greatness of Jesus.
   "Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39)
3. Jesus perceived the situation.
   "And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. . . .
   "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty:
   "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" (Luke 7:40-42)
4. Simon's answer.
   "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." (Luke 7:43)
5. His difficulty was logically removed.
   "Thou hast rightly judged." (Luke 7:43)
6. Simon had neglected social custom.
   "And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, . . . I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet." (Luke 7:44-45)

Comment:

It would have been but customary politeness had the Pharisee given Jesus water and even a servant to wash His feet. In those days people wore sandals. The soles were protected, but the ankles and upper part of the feet were exposed to the dust of the street. Accordingly it became a custom of hospitality, either to have a servant bring water and wash the guest's feet, or else provide an opportunity for the guest to do it himself. This custom had not been observed, so Christ noticed that He had not been treated as a social equal. Observe now what He said about the contrast in what the Pharisee had done and what she had done. (Luke 7:44-46)

7. Then continuing His conversation, He said: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loveth much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." (Luke 7:47)
8. He spoke to the woman. "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke 7:48, 50)

Comment:

Of course the Pharisees challenged the idea of His forgiving sin. It was a challenge of traditional dogma. The woman, however, whose soul was quickened and whose hopes were brightened, knew that she knelt in the presence of a prophet sent of God. Her burden of sin was lifted, for it was His purpose to "set the captive free" and to "bind up the broken-hearted."

Custom would have sent her away, crushed, but the spirit of Jesus said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. 11:28-29)

Life's problems are hard. This is particularly so when sin has weakened not only the body but the spirit as well. When self-respect and wasted life finally result in despair, then it matters much which way our problem leads us. If away from Christ, destruction may await us; but if we can turn to Him, we may hear the words ringing through the ages: "Thy faith hath saved thee." Christ had saved many from disease and infirmities. The woman sinner, however, presents one of the first cases of healing the soul. She was forgiven, for she loved much. Faith had made her whole.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Christ at dinner with a Pharisee.

1. While the dinner proceeded, what did the woman sinner do?
2. When eating, how did people in those days sit at the table?
3. Why was a woman sinner permitted there?
4. What did Jesus do that made the Pharisee question His being a prophet?
5. What question did Jesus present to the Pharisee? What was his answer?
6. What did the woman do which the Pharisee had neglected to do?
7. What did Jesus say to her?
8. What did the Pharisee challenge about the thing Jesus did?
9. What would you say characterized the spirit of the woman?
10. What difference did it make in her life whether she were led away from Jesus or toward Him?
11. Who is forgiven most?
12. What evidence have we that the woman had renounced her sins?
13. Before one can forgive a person, what does one expect him to do?
14. Does forgiveness come by grace alone or by works? Is it an active or a passive principle? Does it require life-adjustments of both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven?
15. Are you able to forgive a person who has wronged you?
16. What qualities of character are necessary for the person who forgives? and the one who is forgiven?
17. How is forgiveness secured?
18. What is the effect of forgiveness in the life of a person?

Problem 35

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

Christ's popularity with the masses of the people continued to increase, both on account of His authoritative teaching and because of His miracles of healing. In almost every city of Galilee there were those who had been cured. Some had been sick with disease, some infirm, others deaf, dumb, or blind. Even lepers had been cured, and finally, the widow's son at Nain had been raised from the dead. Multitudes watched for Him, and when opportunity afforded eagerly listened to His words of life, for His preaching was different from that of the Rabbis.

On the other hand, opposition from the Rabbis and the Pharisees had increased and was even assuming an organized form. Is it not strange that these rulers and leaders were unable to see good in the work of Jesus? It would seem to us that He should have had gratitude, not envy and hatred. But a psychological condition had arisen. As leaders of the Church, they began to look upon Jesus as a dangerous non-conformist, a deceiver of the people. The more Jesus pressed His work and the more popular He became, the greater grew their hatred. They could not deny the fact that Jesus healed all manner of sickness and infirmity. The method by which He did this, however, was not so well established. Recognizing this, they put forth a challenge which was of great importance. It was a challenge which largely determined their future opposition to Him. It was the thing which hastened His suffering.

Problem: By what power and authority, and in whose name, did Christ do miracles? What was Christ's reply?

Bible References: Matt. 9:32-34; Mark 3:21-35.
Matt. 12:22-50; Luke 11:14-20.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus heals the man with the evil spirit.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus heals the man with the evil spirit.

1. "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." (Matt. 9:32-34)

   "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." (Mark 3:22)

Comment:

It is an unpleasant task to consider this problem, but it bears such weight and influence on what followed during Christ's life, that it cannot be passed over. In the first place, the Pharisees and Rabbis believed themselves to be the guardians of Israel's future. Their hopes for the expected kingdom depended on the way Israel lived the Law. According to their belief, Israel would already have been redeemed but for disobedience to law, both the written and the oral laws. Jesus had not honored their traditionalism. Furthermore, He had changed and added to the Law. Again, had He not associated with sinners and publicans? For these and other reasons they considered themselves morally bound now to attack Him personally. Having taken this step, their future policy of conduct toward Him and His work was determined. Thus it became more and more a moral duty to get rid of Him by fair or foul means. Hatred had its way, and so the march toward Calvary began at this time.

On the other hand, Jesus was not unaware of the importance and dangers lurking in their challenge. Opinions differ greatly as to just why He changed the method of His teaching, for about this time He began to deliver His message in parables or hidden sayings. We suggest the idea that Jesus knew that good things said plainly from now on would be either seen as evil or would strike on unhearing ears and antipathetic hearts. He knew that His work would be hampered more and more.

Those whose hearts had not been poisoned by hatred would hear and understand His parables; the others would be unable to find in them statements which might afford opportunity for definite accusations against them.

2. Some time after the first charge was made that Jesus healed through Beelzebub, a similar but more emphatic one came.
   "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." (Matt. 12:22-24)

B.–The belief in evil spirits.

1. In the development of religion among the Babylonians and the Assyrians, there grew up a well-defined belief in demons. They believed the essential reason for pain and torture of the body was this: that some demon was in possession of it. When the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, the children grew up under the influence of this eastern belief. This eastern superstition naturally influenced the Jews. Finally, at the time of Christ the Babylonian belief in demons had warped the Rabbinic idea of Satan and of evil spirits, so that the Jewish idea of the evil power was very different from that held by Christ. These evil spirits, which they called "Shedin," existed, they believed, in human form. They could, however, assume other forms, both male and female. The number of evil spirits was very great, there being no less than one hundred eighty thousand female spirits. "They lurked everywhere around us: in the crumbs on the

floor, in the oil in the vessel, in the water which we would drink, in the diseases which attack us . . in the air, in the room, by day and by night." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 761)

Even in the Jewish Talmud the following statement occurs: "There were evil spirits of certain diseases, as of asthma, croup, rabies, madness . . . On the other hand, Shedin, or evil spirits, might be employed in magic cures of diseases." (Shalb 67a)

"So general at the time of our Lord was the belief in demons and in the power of employing them that even Josephus (Ant. VIII, 2, 5) contended that the power of conjuring up and driving out demons, and of magical cures, had been derived from King Hezekiah to whom God had given it. Josephus declares himself to have been an eye-witness of such a wonderful cure by the repetition of a magical formula. This illustrates the contention of the scribes that the miraculous cures of our Lord were due to demoniac agency." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 762)

One example of cure by magic will illustrate the point. "For a bad cold in the head this remedy is proposed: 'Pour slowly a quart of the milk of a white goat over three cabbage stalks, keep the pot boiling and stir with a piece of Marmehon-wood'." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 774)

C.–The belief in Satan as chief of the evil spirits.

1. They believed that Beelzebub or Satan was the chief of all the evil spirits. He it was who directed their attack upon mankind. He was essentially an enemy to man, and in general had the fiendish desire to hurt and to destroy him. He took particular delight in thwarting man's noble purposes, and even in cutting the lives of men short. A story which comes to us through

the Jewish Talmud will suffice to make the point clear. "Satan appeared as an old man to show Nimrod how to have Abraham cast into the fiery oven, at the same time persuading Abraham not to resist it." (See Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 760)

D.–What the Pharisees claimed regarding Jesus.

1. They claimed that Jesus was not only temporarily, but permanently possessed of a demon. He was, therefore, under the influence of Satan. In other words, Satan worked in and through Him. Assuming that their belief was sincere, we can the better understand how it was that they could not now recognize Jesus as the Son of God, nor even as their expected Messiah; but regarded Him as an incarnation of Satan. It is possible that some of the Pharisees were not sincere in this belief, and championed it as a means of advantage against Jesus to cover up their own selfish desires for leadership and control of religious matters. In general, however, we think that it might well account for their bitter opposition to Him, and for their fanatical desire to kill Him when occasion afforded the opportunity.
2. The spirit of the situation must have been bitter, and Jesus must have been very much misunderstood; for even His kinsmen thought there was something wrong with Him, and sought to get Him away from the dangers which were gathering around Him.

   "And when his friends (kinsmen) heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself."

   "There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him calling him." (Mark 3:21,31)

E.–Jesus answered the Pharisees.

1. "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto

them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:
"And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?
"And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.
"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.
"Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." (Matt. 12:25-29)

Comment:

Jesus knew that famous Rabbis professed to cast out devils by magic and exorcism, and their success was attributed to the power of God. Therefore, Jesus' argument was masterful. If He cast out devils by Satan, then Satan is against Satan. This, of course, was impossible. But if He cast them out by the Spirit of God, a claim which famous Rabbis made, then was the kingdom come near to them.

But Christ's method was certainly not comparable to that of the magicians nor to the method of the Rabbis. He repeated no magic formulas, neither did He use exorcisms. On the other hand, faith formed the bases for His miracles. How often did he say, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." He looked deeply into the lives of those He healed, and where sickness had come as a result of sin He bade them remove the cause: "Go, sin no more." Thus He called men to a new birth, by bidding them to remove the fetters of sin, of worthless traditions, of superstitions, and of false belief.

F.–Jesus recognized in the claim of the Pharisees the most grievous sin.

"Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation;

"Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark 3:28-30)

Comment:

When Jesus was baptized the Holy Ghost had come to Him, and the scriptures state that it remained with Him. At Nazareth when He first declared the spirit of His mission, He made the statement that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor and to heal those in need. During these many months He had walked, He had preached, He had healed through the power and influence of this Spirit. But the Pharisees now claimed that He had done it all through the power of Satan, the prince of the devils. In making such a claim, they themselves had become like Satan, calling good evil and evil good, thus becoming, as it were, dead to every impression of true holiness and unable to recognize it when they saw it. Their sin, therefore, "is against the Spirit, as manifested in the perfect life of Christ, whose acts so evidently reflected God's own benevolence and holiness, that to ascribe them to the devil, was a sin of the most deadly character." (Dummelow, p. 668)

G.–Christ's appeal to the logic of the situation.

"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

"O generation of vipers! how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12:33, 34)

Comment:

The centuries that have passed have demonstrated eloquently that the tree which Christ represented was good, and most certainly the fruits were good. Jesus was right.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus healed the man with the evil spirit.

  1. What condition of affairs led to the problem under consideration?
  2. When Christ healed the dumb man, how, according to the Pharisees, did He do it?
  3. How was it the Pharisees and Rabbis were so unsympathetic toward Jesus and His work?
  4. Account for their believing it a moral duty to oppose Jesus?
  5. Does it seem to you that this condition influenced Jesus to teach in parable?

B.–Rabbinic belief.
  1. What was the Rabbinic belief in Satan, evil spirits, and disease?
  2. In what forms did they believe that the evil spirits appeared?
  3. What diseases were particularly ascribed to demons?
  4. What did Josephus say about the general belief in evil spirits?
  5. Give an example of a cure by magic.

C.–Belief in Satan.
  1. According to their belief, what was Satan's chief joy?

D.–Pharisees' claim.
  1. What claim did they make against Jesus?

E.–Christ's divided house.
  1. What was Christ's answer?
  2. How did Christ's method of healing differ from those of the magicians and the Rabbis?

F.–Christ's answer.
  1. What did Jesus say about their sin?
  2. Why did He think it a grievous sin?

G.–Christ's appeal to logic.
  1. What was Christ's argument as expressed in the fruit of the good tree?
  2. What is the verdict of time with respect to Christ's answer to the whole problem?

PROBLEM 36

WHY JESUS TAUGHT IN PARABLE

Following His controversy with the Pharisees, as recorded in Matt. 12, Christ went down by the sea. "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side." (Matt. 13:1) Mark adds that because of the multitude He entered a ship and sat in it, and thus taught the people who remained on the shore. (See Mark 4:1) "And he spake many things unto them in parables." (Matt. 13:3)

PROBLEM: For what purpose did Jesus teach in parables? What parables did He give at this time?

Bible References: Matt. 13:1-53; Mark 4:1-24; Luke 8:4-28.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The parable of the sower.

1. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. 13:3-9)

Comment:

As suggested in the previous lesson, the use of parables marked a great change in Christ's teaching. The Apostles could not understand the reason for such, so they felt free to ask Him why He did it.

2. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.
"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.
"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." (Matt. 13:10-14)

Comment:

In the previous lesson we tried to show that hatred had filled the hearts of the Pharisees, so that they saw evil even in the good which Jesus did. What He said affected them antipathetically. Furthermore, in their eyes He was an instrument of Satan, casting out devils by Beelzebub. Thus they grew to consider it a moral duty to hinder His work, and even to seek His life. Now in the above explanation of why He taught in parables, Christ clearly realized the condition.

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13:15)

They had become unteachable. If anything would arouse them it would be His parables, because the method of teaching in parables is possibly the most thought-provoking and stimulating of all teaching practice.

3. Christ then added a comforting word to those who desired to hear.
   "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Matt. 13: 16, 17)

Comment:

We are reminded here again of His Beatitude: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6)

We might add this thought, that Jesus did not teach in parables in order to deny any willing soul a knowledge of Him and His work, but rather to preserve and to protect them that they might at the proper time be understood. "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad." (Mark 4:22)

4. "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." (Mark 4:34)

Comment:

"A careful study of these passages will show (1) that Jesus used the parable because it enabled Him to present truth in veiled form. This permitted Him to teach in public in such a way as not to be misunderstood, and in private to explain His thought to His disciples. (2) That Jesus did not wish the crowds to join Him so long as their 'hearts were gross.' * * * (3) That Jesus thus expected that some day these 'hidden' truths would be revealed. * * * (4) That the kingdom thus had its mystery (Mark 4:11) which could be shared and enjoyed only by its members." (Burton and Mathews, pp. 122-123)

B.–The Parables considered.

1. "And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." (Mark 4:10-11)

2. He interprets the parable of the sower.
   a. Before reading His interpretation re-read the parable and make your own interpretation. Then compare your understanding with His. (See Matt. 13:3-9. Then see Matt. 13:19-23)
   b. Get clearly in mind just what a parable is. (See Burton and Mathews, p. 122, or Frederick J. Rae, p. 90)

Comment:

"Jewish writers extol Parables, as placing the meaning of the Law within range of the comprehension of all men." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 581) The parables of Jesus were distinguished from the Jewish in that only those who were in tune with His message could understand. They had to have eyes that could see and ears that could hear. His parables took earthly things to make clear a spiritual meaning, often a meaning which pertained to the Kingdom of God.

3. The parable of the tares.
   a. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:
      "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.
      "But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.
      "So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?
      "He said unto them, An enemy hath done

this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

"But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. 13:24-30)

b. Make your own interpretation. After your effort do you feel like the disciples when they came to him, "saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field"? (Matt. 13:36) Study Jesus' interpretation (Matt. 13:37-43) and compare with your own. Is it likely that Jesus was here referring to the Pharisees and others who saw only evil in what He was doing?

4. The parable of the mustard seed. (See Matt. 13:31-32)
5. The parable of the leaven. (See Matt. 13:33)
6. The parable of the hidden treasure. (See Matt. 13:44)
7. The parable of the pearls. (See Matt. 13:45-46)
8. The parable of the net. (See Matt. 13:47-50)

C.–Had His disciples understood?

1. "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord." (Matt. 13:51)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The parable of the sower.

1. Why did Christ say He taught in parables?
2. Explain what He meant and likely referred to when He said that the peoples' hearts had waxed gross and their ears dull, and that their eyes were closed.

3. What connection do you see between this condition and His fourth Beatitude?
4. Do you think it was in the heart of Jesus to deny any person the privilege of understanding His gospel? Why?
5. What do you think of this statement: The parables were like a Binet test of intelligence, only they tested for sympathetic understanding of spiritual things?
6. Did He use parables to hide truth or to conserve it? Why?
7. Give the four reasons which Burton and Mathews give for Jesus' use of parables.

B.–The parables considered.

1. Did His disciples understand the parable of the sower even after the explanation?
2. What difficulty did you experience in your attempt to interpret it?
3. What, in general, is the meaning as given by Jesus?
4. What was the Jewish attitude toward parables? In what way were Jesus' parables not Jewish?
5. Tell the parable of the tares.
6. What does it mean?
7. In what way is it prophetic?
8. Did you read the parables listed under the numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8?

C.–General.

1. Remembering the fact that Jesus was referring to the Kingdom of God on earth, which He had come to establish, what general things about that Kingdom did He make clear in these seven parables?
2. What reason have we for thinking that His disciples finally understood Him?
3. What reason have we for believing that these parables served Christ's purpose?

PROBLEM 37

THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH TO PREACH

It is extremely difficult to determine in what order events in the life of Jesus occurred during this part of His ministry. We werely mention these without attempting to say which event came first. Miracles continued almost daily. There was the stilling of the tempest (Mark 4:35-41), the healing of the Gadarene demoniacs (Mark 5:1-20), the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-43). It was most likely that during this period He made His second visit to Nazareth (Mark 6:1-6). All the while He continued preaching in various cities of Galilee, where multitudes came to hear His words.

It had become evident to Him that He needed more help. "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37-38)

PROBLEM: Whom did He send forth to preach, what powers did He delegate to them, and how should they proceed?

Bible References: Matt. 10; Mark 6:7-12; Luke 9:1-6.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Twelve sent forth.

1. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:1-2)

Comment:

He gave one reason for sending the Twelve forth. It was that the harvest was ripe and more laborers were necessary. No doubt this was His most important reason. It seems quite likely, however, that the need of help was augmented because of the determined opposition of the Rabbis and the Pharisees to Him personally. We tried to make it clear in a pervious problem that these men claimed that Jesus performed His work through evil powers, and that they felt morally bound to hinder and destroy where possible. One answer to their efforts was His teaching by parable, as explained in the previous problem.

Another answer now came in sending the Twelve forth. Most of the present opposition centered around the personality of Jesus and His authority. There was no such hatred at this time of these other men. True, He had warned them in the parable of the sower, and also in the one of the tares, that trouble awaited them, but that it would take time for it to develop. In the meanwhile the kingdom would continue to grow. We can well imagine how the Rabbis and Pharisees felt when news was brought to them that twelve of Jesus' disciples had gone forth preaching the same doctrine which Jesus preached. Jesus met their organized effort to oppose with an organized and ordained ministry. Thus in the face of great difficulty He moved forward to accomplish His work. Should He be taken, others would be trained.

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9:36)

2. Instructions.
   a. To whom to go.
      "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5-6)
   b. What to preach.
      "And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse

the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. 10: 7-8)

Comment:

According to Dean Plumptre, the words "raise the dead" are omitted by the best manuscript. However, Dummelow, Vol. I, p. 661, says "The clause is accepted by all modern editors."

Jesus granted them power to do the very things for which the Rabbis had opposed Him and accused Him of doing through evil sources. We note, however, that the spirit of their mission was the same as that of His own, which He disclosed at Nazareth. (See Isa. 61:1-2)

c. What to provide.

"Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses; Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." (Matt. 10:9-10)

Comment:

These directions "exactly correspond to the Rabbinic injunction not to enter the Temple-precincts with staff, shoes (not sandals), and a money-girdle. (Ber. IX:5) The symbolic reasons underlying this command would, in both cases, be probably the same: to avoid even the appearance of being engaged on other business, when the whole being should be absorbed in the service of the Lord." (Edersheim, Vol I, p. 643)

"The dress of an ancient oriental was quite simple, consisting, aside from sandals for the feet and a turban, or 'maaphoreth', for the head, of a tunic (coat), a garment in form not unlike a long shirt, round which the girdle was bound, and a cloak, which was of the simplest construction, scarcely more than a large, square piece of cloth. * * * To wear two tunics was a sign of comparative wealth (Luke 3:11), and it was this that Jesus forbade. * * * The purpose of all these injunctions * * * is to secure simplicity and freedom from hindrance in their work. * * * The customs of the land made it unnecessary to provide for traveling expenses, since they went afoot and could obtain free entertainment everywhere." (Burton and Mathews, pp. 130-131) May we not suggest another reason? In His Beatitudes Jesus had advised humility and meekness, dependence upon Him and His Father. By complying with His instructions they would the more feel their dependence upon Him.

d. How to act.

"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet." (Matt. 10:11-14)

Comment:

The sentiment here expressed is quite Jewish in form. The dust of Gentile country or its environment, according to custom, defiled a person until evening. The idea expressed here by Jesus was evidently that the ban of the Lord would rest upon such city or house. It would be considered as Gentile.

e. His warning.

"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." (Matt. 10:25-27)

Comment:

This warning makes clear our previous statement that the sending forth of the Twelve was closely associated with the trend of opposition which had developed. Notwithstanding this, they were to speak plainly the things which He had taught them. They were to proclaim the deepest truths about the Kingdom and concerning the person of Jesus. We have not referred to parts of this discourse which evidently forecast events of the future.

f. Whom to fear.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body." (Matt. 10:28)

g. Reward.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32-33)

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10:40)

3. "And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere." (Luke 9:6)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Twelve sent forth.

1. Give two reasons of Christ's for sending them to preach. (For one see Matt. 9:36)
2. What other reason likely influenced Him at this time?
3. What warning in parable had He given them?
4. To whom should they preach?
5. What should they teach?
6. Compare this with Isa. 61:1-2.
7. What should they not provide to take with them? Why?

8. What should they do in case of acceptance or rejection of their message?
9. What should their policy be with respect to preaching the essential things which Jesus taught them?
10. Why could they speak openly with greater success than could Jesus at this time?
11. Whom should they fear?
12. In return for all, what was His promise?
13. Do you think Jesus was wise in sending forth the Twelve? Why?

Problem 38

WHAT DEFILES THE MAN?

When Jesus had returned to Capernaum after feeding the five thousand, "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem." (Matt. 15:1) They complained about Jesus' not observing their tradition of washing.

Problem: What is it that defiles a man?

Bible References: Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The complaint of the Pharisees.

1. "And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

   "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

   " . . . And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

   "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" (Mark 7:2-5)

Comment:

It is to be noted particularly that the question admitted that the matter was a challenge of the tradition of the elders and not a disregard of the Law of Moses. "The Talmud indicates that to disregard this tradition of washing the hands before eating 'would lead to temporal destruction, or at least to poverty'. * * * Indeed a Rabbi who had held this command in contempt was actually buried in excommunication." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 11)

"The hands were lifted up, so as to make the water run to the wrist, in order to ensure that the whole hand was washed, and that the water polluted by the hand did not again run down the fingers. * * * If the hands were 'defiled', two effusions were required."

A very curious case of defiling the hand is this: "Hence, the Holy Scriptures defiled not only the food but the hands that touched them, and this not merely in the Temple, but anywhere, while it was also explained that the Holy Scriptures included the whole of the inspired writings—the Law, Prophets and Hagiographa. * * * Even the Phylacteries, because they contained portions of the sacred text, the very leather straps by which they were bound to the head and arm * * * were declared to 'defile' the hand." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 13)

Thus, "defiled" hands did not mean dirty hands, but it had reference to religious traditions handed down by the Scribes.

2. Christ's answer.

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

"Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

"For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

"But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

"And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." (Mark 7:6-7, 9-13)

Comment:

Jesus was never more pronounced than He was here in denouncing traditionalism. Now it was a well-recognized principle that "ordinances of the scripture needed no confirmation." However, the traditional law needed such, and might never contradict the scripture. In the above quoted scripture, when Jesus showed that their tradition of Corban contradicted and violated the spirit of the fifth commandment, He dealt a very heavy blow to their traditionalism. It stood condemned on its own showing.

The tradition of Corban was this: It was simply a vow which one made by saying "Corban, that by which thou mightest be profited by me." It meant that all property and help was dedicated to the altar and henceforth the individual had no claim thereon. In the case of father and mother, a child might say the above vow and he was there and then relieved of rendering any further help or aid to them. This vow was binding. Thus Christ challenged it as nullifying the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." Thus He showed that they laid aside the commandments of God that they might keep the commandments of men.

3. Christ explains the true principle of defilement.

"And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them. . . .

"There is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 7:14-16)

4. The disciples asked the meaning of the parable.

"And he saith unto them, . . . Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart . . .

"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

> "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
> "Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:
> "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:18-23)

Comment:

Defilement with the Rabbinic school meant ceremonial uncleanliness. With Christ it meant all evil ideas, motives, and purposes. Thus Christ placed the principle on a moral basis. The contrast between the two is as distinct as between day and night. Christ's stands supremely great. Whence came His wisdom? Surely He was sent of God.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The complaint and answer.

1. What complaint did the Pharisees make?
2. What was the custom of the Jews with respect to washing?
3. Was their objection particularly because the hands of the disciples might have been soiled, or did they speak of ceremonial defilement?
4. Was it a question of disregard for the Law of Moses, or was it disregard of Rabbinic tradition?
5. Explain what they meant by "defiled" hands.
6. Name some things which would ceremonially defile the hands.
7. What was Christ's answer?
8. What counter-charge did He offer about their traditions?
9. What did saying "Corban" mean, and how was it evil?
10. What did Jesus say really defiled a man?
11. What is the main difference between Christ's idea of defilement and the Rabbinic idea?

Problem 39

THE BREAD OF LIFE

For some time the Twelve had pressed their work throughout Galilee. "And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida." (Luke 9:10) Mark adds the idea that Jesus invited them into a desert place to rest a while "for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." (Mark 6:31) They departed by ship. The people, however, ran afoot from the various cities, and when Jesus and His disciples landed, already a multitude awaited. Jesus taught them many things. When the day was "far spent" the disciples requested that He send them away. But He could not do that, for He knew they were hungry. So occurred the miracle known as The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

We referred to this incident in the problem on the temptation of Jesus. It was here at this time that the people would have accepted Him as their king. Many believed Him to be the Messiah, and they expected the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom and were now willing to champion His cause. But Jesus knew their hearts and also their human natures. He saw again this great temptation arising. So He sent them away and went "up into a mountain to pray." His Apostles rowed back to the land of Gennesaret. During the night when a storm arose, Jesus came walking on the water to them. (See Matt. 14:23-34) Jesus had denied the people's enthusiasm. Doubt in Him as the Messiah crept into their hearts. If He were the Messiah, why did He not make an effort to be the One and establish the long expected Jewish kingdom? Some, no doubt, left then and there. Others, however, when they could not find Him returned to Capernaum the following day.

PROBLEM: If Jesus be not the Christ, to whom shall we go to find life eternal?

Bible Reference: John 6:22-71.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–After the return from feeding the five thousand.

1. Jesus understood the motive for their wanting to make Him king.

"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." (John 6:26-27)

Comment:

Well had Jesus understood. They had not desired to make Him king because they loved Him and His work more than life itself; but rather their purpose was a selfish one. They would follow Him because He would feed them. In a broader sense, Jesus recognized in the situation the carnal Judaistic expectancies, a kingdom of meat and drink, of power and station, a coarse miraculous triumph over the hated Gentile, and Israel as the revengeful oppressor of all nations. Nevertheless, there had already been a selective process going on, and those who now had come seeking Him were people who believed most. The others had left.

Again, Jesus would now speak in Capernaum, a city which had seen so many of His miracles; and in the Synagogue ruled by His good friend Jairus. There seemed to have prevailed, therefore, a good mental and moral situation, as well as good outward environment, to enable Him to make clear in parable His mission. If this people were ever going to be able to understand, it seemed that now was a good opportunity to speak of some of His highest teachings. But they were not inwardly prepared.

2. A further question.
   "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John 6:28)
3. Christ's answer.
   a. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29)
   b. In reply they asked for a sign that they might believe, saying that their fathers had eaten manna in the desert when God gave them bread from heaven. (See John 6:31)
      "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
      "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:32-33)

Comment:

Their minds had not been changed. They still thought of physical bread to supply selfish needs; for they said: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." (John 6:34)

   c. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
      "But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." (John 6:35-36)

Comment:

It is but natural that this statement caused the people to murmur, for they could not realize that He had been sent of God. For had He not lived in Nazareth, and were not Joseph and Mary His parents? Jesus understood their trouble, so told them no one could come to Him except the Father would draw him.

   d. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51)

Comment:

At this point the Jews grew very much displeased. How could He give His flesh to eat? It seems strange that this people who were used to the customary parable always interpreted Christ's words literally.

e. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6:53)

Comment:

We cannot resist the feeling that Jesus knew at this time His mission to the end. He had in mind the giving of His life for the "deepest need and hunger of our souls." He must also have had in mind His Holy Sacrament which He would set in His Church as a remembrance and symbol, and seal of His death. He had, therefore, been trying to tell this people the central purpose of His mission; but they had not ears to hear. Even His disciples said: "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60) That His own disciples should murmur must have filled His soul with sorrow, for He turned to them saying: "Doth this offend you?" (John 6:61) Then He tried to make it clear that He spoke in parable. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

4. Results.

a. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:66)

Comment:

The crisis in His ministry had arrived. Up until this time His work and popularity had continually increased. The peak had now been reached. He would begin to withdraw more and more, as greater and greater opposition confronted Him. He had reached the parting of the ways, and many fell away to follow Him no more.

b. What did the Apostles do?

There evidently was disappointment written on the faces of the Apostles because of Christ's parable.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:67-69)

Comment:

After being with Jesus and hearing His words of life, the teachings of the Rabbis must have seemed but dry chaff to these Apostles. Peter's words, "to whom shall we go," indicate a hopeless state in the world. If He did not have the way of life eternal, then where could one turn? Nowhere could it be found. As we study the great religions of today, and see how great the teachings of Jesus are in comparison, we still feel as Peter did. If Jesus were not sent from God to teach the way to eternal life, then where shall we go?

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–After the return from the feeding of the five thousand.

1. According to Jesus, why had the people sought Him in Capernaum?
2. What did the people expect Him to do as the Messiah?
3. They asked Him what they should do. What was His answer?
4. They asked for a sign and referred to Moses who gave their fathers manna in the wilderness. What was Christ's reply?
5. In what way is Christ the bread of life?
6. Why could they not understand?
7. In speaking more plainly Jesus but added to the difficulty. To what did He refer when He said they must eat His flesh and drink His blood?

8. Compare this with our blessings on the Sacrament.
9. What were the results of His parable?
10. What is significant about Peter's reply?

PROBLEM 40

PETER'S CONFESSION

During our study of the last two problems, we noted that the Pharisees had increased their opposition. Furthermore, many of the people had turned away from Jesus. Even His disciples murmured. It is not, therefore, unexpected that Jesus would withdraw into temporary retirement. In looking over His recent success, the most positive results have been His selection of the Twelve, their faith in Him and loyalty to Him, and in connection therewith His relieving of the sick. He withdrew for a short time to Tyre and Sidon, some twenty-five to forty-five miles northwest from the Sea of Galilee. (Matt. 15:21)

Shortly, however, He returned through Decapolis. Here He healed many, and when the multitude was great He fed four thousand, a miracle similar to that of feeding the five thousand. Again He attempted to return to His beloved Galilee. He sailed over to Dalmanutha. But no sooner had He landed than the Pharisees, ever spying upon His actions, came forth requesting a sign. "And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation." (Mark 8:12)

Is it not peculiar that the Jews did not look upon His healing as a sign? But they did not, for they said He did it through Beelzebub. Now what they wanted was some sign of fire. Moses had seen God in the "burning bush," and the pillar of fire had led Israel. If Jesus were the Messiah, why could He not show such signs? But He would not. "And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side." (Mark 8:13) Shortly after this He withdrew to the regions around Caesarea Philippi. (Mark 8:27)

Let us follow briefly Edersheim's description of the country over which they would most naturally travel. Going northwards from the Sea of Galilee a distance of about ten miles, they reached the uppermost Jordan-Lake. A little farther on they entered the old Roman road. Here they walked amidst vines and mulberry trees. The path led through a narrow valley, and ascended through a rocky wilderness of hills. In a not far distant plain all the springs of the Jordan united. Some three miles farther on they crossed a bridge of the upper Jordan, or rather Hasbany, where the stream rushed under a canopy of oleanders, honeysuckles, clematis, and wild roses, and dashed and splashed over boulders of basalt. About an half hour's journey to the east was the city of Dan, and a little farther on the city of Caesarea Philippi. "Everywhere there is a wild medley of cascades, mulberry-trees, fig-trees, dashing torrents, festoons of vines, bubbling fountains, reeds and ruins, and the mingled music of birds and waters." (Tristram, "Land of Israel," p. 586) It was into such country that Jesus and His Apostles now retired.

PROBLEM: "Whom do men say that I am?" "But whom say ye that I am?" Why is the answer important to Jesus?

Bible References: Matt. 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus' question.

1. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" (Matt. 16:13)

Comment:

When Jesus said "I am the bread of life" and attempted to make clear who He was, the people murmured, and many left Him. The effect must have lingered in His mind. Now when alone in the mountains with the Twelve, He wondered what the people thought. They would talk more freely to them than to Him. Thus His question, "Whom do men say that I am?"

2. The answer.

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." (Matt. 16:14)

Comment:

This seems a little strange, for the Jews generally did not believe in transmigration of souls. It is probable, however, that the foreign elements, who lived in and near Galilee and who may have come in contact with the eastern belief of transmigration, believed during superstitious moments in the return of the ancients. It may have been that they had reference to Jesus as coming in the spirit and power of these men.

3. "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:15-16)

Comment:

In asking this question it would seem that Jesus had desired more than a mere statement of their belief. He had chosen these men to be with Him, that He might train them to understand and to press forward the work when He should be taken away. Events were happening rapidly. The crisis in His popularity had been reached, and even the people were refusing to follow Him further. This little group of twelve had weathered successfully the trouble so far; but the time was approaching when the severest test of all must come to them. Were they prepared to meet it? If they failed, there was a gloomy outlook for His cause. He had evidently led them away, to be with them alone, for a purpose. He had further truth to tell them. Could they bear it? How strong was their faith in Him? Did they actually believe Him to be the Messiah sent of God? More than any of the others, Peter seemed to have a firm conviction and a fairly settled consciousness that Jesus was the Christ. At Capernaum a few days before he had so declared, when others were murmuring and departing from Him.

4. Christ's memorable statement.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:17-19)

Comment:

St. Mark and St. Luke pass over the questions of how Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, upon what He would build His Church, and what authority would be granted. The statement of these is left to St. Matthew. Some authors are inclined to think, therefore, that these may have been of later origin.

At any rate, Jesus was satisfied with Peter's answer. His faith seemed to be as solid as a rock. It did not rest upon information from man, but God had revealed it unto him. We have every reason to believe that most of the others concurred with Peter, although perhaps with not so much understanding. Truly herein had He found strength and faith upon which to build His Church.

He was now ready to make a promise that He would, at the proper time, grant unto Peter, and no doubt the others with him, the right to exercise discipline and authority in the Church. This is the meaning of granting the keys of the kingdom to him.

Acting upon this authority Peter, with the others, would have power to decide what should and what should not be done. This principle was well understood by the people. When a Rabbi was ordained by the laying on of hands, he was given the power to "bind" and to "loose", i. e., to act as a judge and to decide what was lawful and what was not lawful to do. To illustrate, Rabbi Jochanan said: "They necessarily loose (i. e., permit) saluting on the Sabbath." On the other hand the school of Shamman "binds (i. e., forbids) gathering wood on feast days." This same power, and no doubt more, would be granted them. But what is of greater importance, what they would "bind" and "loose" would be valid not only on earth, but would also be honored in heaven.

The inferences drawn from this incident have caused much debate among sects of Christendom. We do not care to enter into these discussions. We feel certain that the thing uppermost in Christ's mind was to make sure that those whom He had chosen and whom He loved, might be strong enough to carry on and to withstand the disappointments and troubles immediately ahead. But He charged them not to tell anyone that He was the Christ.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Christ in heathen lands.

1. Into what heathen country did Jesus retire immediately after His discourse on the Bread of Life?
2. When He returned into Decapolis what events occurred?
3. Give a brief description of the country around Caesarea Philippi.

A.–b.–Christ presented questions to the Apostles.

1. What purpose did Christ have for presenting the question, "Whom do men say that I am?"
2. What was Peter's reply?
3. What was Peter's reply to Christ's question, "Whom say ye that I am?"
4. According to St. Matthew what was Christ's answer to Peter's confession?

5. What is significant concerning this promise to Peter?
6. Why do you think Christ presented the question?
7. What is your conclusion as to the most significant aspect of this incident?

PROBLEM 41

CHRIST'S DEATH FORETOLD

PROBLEM: Life is our greatest heritage. How may it best be used?

Bible References: Matt. 16:21-28; Mark 8:31-38; Luke 9:22-27.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The way of Christ's life pointed out.

1. Jesus discloses the fact that He must suffer death at the hands of His enemies.

Comment:

It was during their hour of prayer when Jesus and the Twelve were together that He had asked the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter's answer marked the zenith of the rising faith of the Twelve. With this Jesus seemed to be pleased. The fact that He proceeded to present to them the most discouraging and disappointing truth about Himself is evidence that He felt they were strong enough to bear it.

It seems, as we mentioned in the previous problem, that to find favorable opportunity to make such a disclosure was one of the purposes for which He left the jostling, crowding multitudes. It must have been one of the great trials of His life to disclose to those whom He loved so much a message about Himself which would be hard, so hard for them to bear, but which they must learn. His problem was to conserve their faith until they could understand.

There, in the spirit of prayer, surrounded by God's natural temples, when hearts were softened and faith was made strong, "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. 16:21)

We can imagine the disappointment which filled their hearts. We are well informed by this time of the current belief of the Messiah, and what He would do when He came. People thought His Kingdom would last forever, and that all nations would become subject to Jerusalem. No doubt His disciples shared to some extent this belief, although they had become aware that Jesus was not fulfilling all the expectations. To be told now that He must suffer, and must be killed, came as a shock. A little while before they were carried to the very climax of faith; now they were thrown to the anticlimax of disappointment. But we have the assurance that they did not understand nor realize fully what Jesus had said. At least Peter's answer indicates so much, and the events that follow make the point even more clear.

The teaching which Jesus had at this time disclosed "was the needed sequence of Peter's confession—needed, not only for the correction of misunderstanding, but for direction." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 86)

2. "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." (Matt. 16:22)

Comment:

Thus Peter's testimony, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," seems, on first thought, to mark a clear faith and knowledge of Jesus, yet he could not now understand that Christ's success lay in the Cross. "Be it far from thee." This thing must not happen. There is a note of encouragement in Peter's statement. Do not despair, Master. Though gathering clouds of opposition and trouble already fill the horizon, yet this defeat must not come to Thee. We must look forward to ever greater work until the Kingdom is assured. But Peter did not understand.

3. Christ's answer.

"But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. 16:23)

Comment:

The words seem so harsh and firm. We can hardly feel that Peter deserved them. But a momentous question was at hand. Unknowingly, Peter's idea would destroy rather than help. If followed, the great mission of our

Savior would have been frustrated. In substance it was a suggestion to digress from the true goal of the Christ, and accept what Satan had suggested during Jesus' great temptation. Christ recognized the deviltry of it, and with firmness told Peter that He was displeased, that the idea savored of Satan, and could not be.

4. Jesus then said unto His disciples:
"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.
"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.
"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:24-26)

Comment:

The saving of life is generally thought of as escaping death. But it is clear that Jesus not only meant physical life, but "all those powers, opportunities and possibilities which life brings. One who tries to hoard these, hold them for himself, in reality wastes and loses life. 'And whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's': in devotion to me, for the promotion of the ends for which I gave life, shall save it." (Burton and Mathews, p. 157)

In doing this one may not escape death, but one makes the highest use of life's energies and powers, and indeed conserves it from waste and destruction. Jesus appealed to one of the noblest desires we can have, that of realizing one's own highest possibilities, and that, too, inseparably connected with the highest good of mankind. This is Christian love. If one strives for selfish ends, for selfish needs, for selfish ambitions, and thereby loses his own soul, what has he gained? That which crumbles as chaff. Life has been wasted, and cannot be brought back.

It would seem that Jesus saw in the hearts of some of the Twelve these selfish ambitions, and so taught them the greater values of life.

5. But Jesus did not leave them hopeless. After this deep disappointment and bitter struggle,

there was to be a greater period, one which they had expected would come now but which could not be till then.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:27-28)

Comment:

Thus within the hearts of this downcast little group, He kindled anew the hope that though He be slain yet He would come in glory to reward every man. This hope has not died out through the ages. And now, not twelve, but millions await His second coming.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus must suffer death.

1. Before Jesus would make known that He must be killed, what did He find out about the faith of His Apostles?
2. Why was the fact hard for Him to disclose, and why was the message so disappointing to His Apostles?
3. Why was it necessary to make known the fact that He had to suffer?
4. What was Peter's reaction?
5. What was Christ's answer to Peter?
6. What reason can you give for Christ's firm answer?
7. What did He say about the saving and the losing of life?
8. Why did He speak of such a subject?
9. How can one best save his life?
10. In the broad sense what did Christ mean?
11. Finally what hope did Jesus kindle within the hearts of His downcast group of Apostles?

PROBLEM 42

THE TRANSFIGURATION

We have reason to believe that Christ and His disciples remained near Caesarea Philippi during the ensuing week, after He spoke of His death. According to tradition, He had gone to Mount Tabor, but no such journey is mentioned by any of the gospel writers. "Again Mount Tabor was at this time crowned by a fortified city, which would have rendered it unsuitable for the scene of the Transfiguration." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 92)

PROBLEM: What significance may be ascribed to the Transfiguration?

Bible References: Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9: 28-36.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Certain disciples at the Transfiguration.

1. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart." (Matt. 17:1) Luke adds that they "went up into a mountain to pray." (Luke 9:28)

Comment:

It had been hard for the Twelve to sense the new turn of events. They did not understand, neither could they find peace of soul. Christ's late announcement that His mission from then on led to the Cross, stunted hopes and ambitions. "For these disciples were following their King to a throne, not a cross; to dominion, not death; to glory, not to a grave." (Carver, p. 113) But what was harder still, it required adjustments in faith and in attitudes, which are always so difficult to make. Under such a trial the weak and selfish fall away. We can imagine that Judas, the practical man of affairs, could not find anchor to stay himself, and from this moment on walked in His company with more and more uneasiness because of being unable to adjust and to solve anew the ever-present problem of faith.

For a full week the great crisis of faith-adjustments and future hopes besieged the hearts of these bewildered men, whom Jesus had chosen to be with Him, and upon whom His hopes for the future of the Church rested. But out of that struggle and test three men who had, in part at least, found the spirit of the Beatitudes, emerged. They were able to proceed in the spirit of prayer. So Jesus chose Peter, James, and John, and took them apart, farther up the mountain, in order to pray with them; for He as well as they needed strength and encouragement. The task of the Messiah required strength beyond that of man.

2. When they were alone, Jesus called them to prayer.
   "And (he) was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him." (Matt. 17:2-3)

Comment:

The sign had come at last. These men had heard Jesus frequently deny the unbelieving Pharisee a sign. No sign would be given to such. But to these three it was possible.

3. St. Luke adds a significant statement: "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias (Elijah) ; Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke 9:30-31)

Comment:

The very problem which Jesus had brought to them, and which for a week had weighed heavily upon their souls, was now being discussed, and that, too, with the two greatest exponents of God in Hebrew history:

Moses, the great law-giver; and Elijah, the mighty prophet. They were likely not permitted to hear all that needed to be said. Part was for Jesus Himself. But it was enough. What Jesus had said about His task was true. His mission led to Jerusalem, and thence to the Cross.

4. "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." (Mark 9:5)
   "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear him.
   "And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves." (Mark 9:7-8)

Comment:

Once before this same voice had honored Jesus. You will remember it was at the time of His baptism. On that occasion there came to Him knowledge of Himself and His powers, which drove Him into the wilderness for thought and prayer. Now again God spoke. He bade Him proceed to the Cross. Peter, James, and John heard Him. The words, "hear him," were evidently an admonition to give ear to what Jesus had tried to explain to them concerning His death. His announced course of action the Father sanctioned. What reason had they for further doubt, or for any more murmuring? They must follow Him to the Cross as they would have followed Him to glory, but the way would be hard to bear. Jesus must lead the way, must interpret His Messiahship and His redeeming love.

5. "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.
   "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." (Mark 9:9-10)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Transfiguration.

1. Whom did Jesus take with Him up to the Mount of Transfiguration? What mountain was it?
2. Account for His taking these men and not the others.
3. How was Jesus transfigured before them?
4. What heavenly messengers came and talked with Him?
5. According to St. Luke, what was the subject of their conversation? Note that this confirmed what Jesus had attempted to make clear to them.
6. What was the message of the Voice from heaven?
7. Should they or should they not tell what they had seen and heard? Why?
8. What is the significant aspect of the whole incident of the Transfiguration?

PROBLEM 43

FORGIVENESS

Some commentators speak of the Transfiguration as the summit of Christ's ministry, and that henceforth He traveled the downward journey to Calvary. We like to think, however, that the rest of His life is not a descent. Instead, He had not yet reached the top. The higher one climbs to scale the rugged mountain peak, the greater are the difficulties, for crags increase and grow more steep. Cliffs raise their perpendicular walls and make hard the ascent. So it was with Jesus. He did not descend; but with great courage He pressed on, surmounting challenge after challenge. Finally, He reached the summit. He lifted an ignominious death into the glory of eternal life.

The problems and difficulties which confronted Him on the way were numerous, too numerous for us in the scope of this work to consider. It will therefore be necessary for us to select for consideration only a few of those remaining.

After returning from the Transfiguration, Jesus found the nine Apostles in difficulty. They had tried to heal the demoniac boy, but had failed. Can we wonder? During that week of sorrow and disappointment, faith and hopes had fallen. That they had failed brought sorrow to His heart. "O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you?" (Mark 9:19) Then Jesus healed the boy. (Mark 9:23-29)

The purpose for His withdrawal to wonderful old Mount Hermon had been accomplished, so they departed and came to Capernaum, His home in Galilee. But on the way the Apostles were at times in hot dispute. The question among them was a selfish one, caused perhaps by the fact that Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John with Him to witness the Transfiguration. "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest." (Luke 9:46) This emphasizes the idea that at least some of the Apostles were "following their King to a throne, not to the Cross." But Jesus perceived their thoughts and attempted to correct them. "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

PROBLEM: How often shall one forgive another?

Bible References: Matt. 18:21-22; Luke 17:1-4.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–How oft should one forgive?

1. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matt. 18:21)

Comment:

The Rabbis taught that three offenses should be pardoned. Peter, in proposing seven, no doubt considered himself very liberal. But why the question at all? It seems that the hot disputes as to who should be greatest had caused feelings. This seems the more likely in the light of the question of James and John and also of their mother. Peter was evidently growing tired of the dispute and of the jealousy. He no doubt had forgiven a number of times. But the matter continued. Hence his question: "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"

2. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." (Matt. 18:22) The meaning is made somewhat more forceful a little later. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee . . . seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4)

Comment:

In presenting this question we see how far away Peter was from a correct understanding of what Jesus had said. For, had He not taught them in the Lord's Prayer to ask for forgiveness in a manner typifying their own willingness to forgive? Had He not further said: "Love your enemies," and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"? But with greater force had He taught: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5:7, 9)

3. Then Jesus gave a parable to reenforce His message. (See Matt. 18:23-35)

Comment:

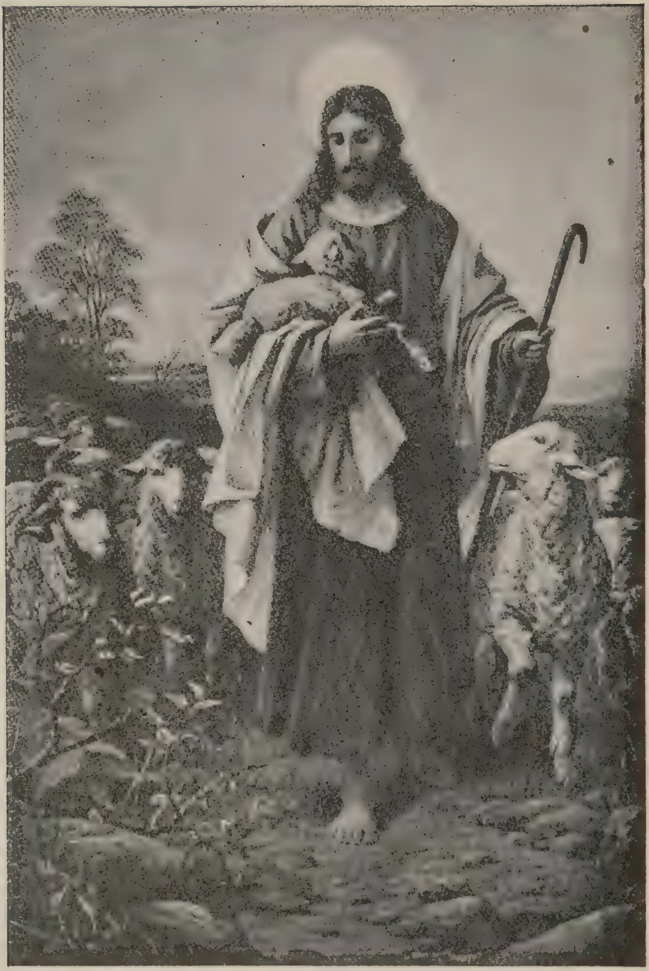
The spirit of Christ knew no bounds to love. Forgiveness should not be reckoned by numbers, but by penitence and charity. It is quality and sincerity of motives that count. "Freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:8)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Forgiveness.

1. After descending from Mount Hermon, what condition did Jesus find among His nine Apostles who had remained at the base while He and the other three had been at the Transfiguration? What did Christ do?
2. When returning to Capernaum, what dispute arose among the Apostles? Why?
3. What was Peter's question about forgiveness?
4. Why did he present such a question?
5. How did Peter's proposal to forgive correspond with the custom of the Rabbis?
6. What was Christ's answer?
7. Do you think it possible to forgive often?
8. If you forgave often, what would you expect the offender to do?

9. Forgiveness depends upon what quality of character?
10. What should determine the number of times one should forgive the same offender?
11. What would you think of the condition of a person who needed to be forgiven from the same individual many times a day?
12. Would so frequent forgiveness weaken or strengthen character?
13. Is it possible to comply with Christ's teaching of forgiveness?



THE GOOD SHEPHERD

PROBLEM 44

CHRIST'S CLAIM

For the first two and a half years of Christ's ministry He was very careful concerning specific statements about Himself, and had warned those whom He healed to tell no one. Again, when Peter made his great confession, and after the revelation which came at the Transfiguration, Jesus warned His Apostles not to tell who He was, or what they had seen, until He had risen from the dead. But during the last six months of His life, He became more definite in His claims, though still guarded against making bold statements, which might have cut His life short before He had finished His work.

PROBLEM: What specific claims did Christ make for Himself and His mission? What occasions called them forth? What were the results?

Bible References: John, chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Jesus goes to the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. The time for the Feast of Tabernacles had arrived. It was celebrated in the seventh month (September-October) at the close of the fruit harvest. In some respects this was the greatest feast of the year. It was a joyful festival, though religious in nature. Christ's immediate family were intending to go. In our consideration of the temptations of Jesus, we referred to this incident; for it was at this time that Christ's brothers bade Him go to Jerusalem and show Himself and His powers, thus tempting Him. Jesus did not go

with them, but did go about the middle of the week. (John 7:1-14)

2. "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.
   "And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:14-15)

Comment:

They evidently referred to His never having studied under the great Rabbis such as Hillel, Shammai, Gamaliel, and others. That He had been a very earnest and thoughtful student results attest. Attention was called to this in our study of His boyhood and youth. Furthermore, it is clear to us now that through prayer He had received many things from His Father.

3. Christ's answer.
   "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (John 7:16)

Comment:

One must ever marvel at Christ's power to see essentials first. He got directly at the heart of problems, and therefore His teachings had vitality. One reason for this was that His doctrines came from God. But let us not think for a moment that He got them without effort, for He did not. He got them in the battle field of study, thought, trials, sorrows, fasting, prayer, and the daily experiences of life.

4. A way to test His teachings.
   "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17)

Comment:

The Pharisees had continually asked for a sign that they might believe. But Jesus would not give a sign. For one reason, He knew that those who built on signs faltered; on the other hand, that the solid test for faith lay in application. If one would do the will of the

Father, he would have the evidence in his own life that the doctrines were good. One who would apply this test would not need to ask for argument from the Rabbis or for signs to bolster up faith.

He bade them apply in religion the same principle which the scientist applies in all fields of endeavor. If a chemist would know whether there be gold in his mineral sample, he applies a series of chemicals; and if the right precipitate is thrown down, he knows gold is present. If the construction engineer desires to know if certain material be strong enough to support a contemplated structure, he may place the material in his machines for testing strength. Then by tremendous pulling, twisting, or pressing the strength may be determined. He will then know how to proceed. Christ would have His disciples do likewise in religion. It is the same principle. Apply the doctrines, and you shall know whether they be right or wrong.

5. His statements concerning Himself and His work.
   a. "Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

      "Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

      "But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me." (John 7:27-29)

Comment:

This statement angered the Pharisees, but the belief of the people checked their immediate desire to take Him. However, they sent officers to take Him later, if possible. But finally the officers returned. When asked why they had not brought Him, they reported: "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46)

   b. The following day Jesus spoke to the people. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Comment:

There was a well-established custom among the Jews that if one bore record of himself, it was not true. It was a boastful fellow who made such claims. Thus they challenged His statement. But Jesus reminded them that they judged according to man's judgment or custom, but He judged no man. We are reminded here of what He said in the Sermon on the Mount: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Jesus reminded them of their own law that "the testimony of two men is true." "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." (John 8:17-18) They attempted to have Him declare Himself plainly when they asked: "Where is thy Father?" But He answered: "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (John 8:19)

c. A more direct question.

"Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." (John 8:25) Then Jesus reminded them that some sought to kill Him. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (John 8:28)

d. Jesus declared Himself to the man who was born blind, but whom He had healed.

"When he (Jesus) had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9:35) The man did not know Jesus, so asked: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." (John 9:36-37)

e. The good shepherd.

Toward the close of the discourse which followed the healing of the man born blind, Jesus chastized those who claimed for God that which was not from Him. Then He said:

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John 10:10-11)

Comment:

"In the interpretation of the figure it must be remembered that the shepherd is the type of the king (Jer. 23:1-4; Ezek. 34:1-15; Micah 5:5), and of the Messianic king in particular. And while Jesus does not in this paragraph specifically name himself, he is undoubtedly thinking of himself as the shepherd, in contrast with all who had sought to establish their kingdom by force—a thing which was more or less true of many, if not all, past kings of Israel." (Burton and Mathews, p. 184)

Though the methods and teachings which He had consistently followed from the day of decision—His temptation—He had shown that He was the true shepherd, or in other words the true Messiah who came in meekness and love, because of which His people rejected Him; for they expected Him to come in power and force and glory. The whole parable is a most masterful presentation of His Messiahship, yet He does not employ the word "Messiah".

f. His love for the sheep shown.

"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:15, 18)

Comment:

> This, then, is the object of His mission. To give His life and take it up again was a power granted by His Father, and a voluntary act of self-denial on His part. "It marked a noble close of the series of those Discourses in the Temple, which had for their object to show that He was truly sent of God." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 193)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. When was the Feast of Tabernacles held?
2. For what purpose was it held?
3. Why did the kinsmen of Jesus want Him to go?
4. Later when Jesus went to the Feast, how did His teachings affect the people?
5. Where did Jesus claim He got His doctrines?
6. What "acid" test did Jesus give by which one might know the truthfulness of His doctrines?
7. What was His attitude about faith based upon miracles?
8. How does this test for religion compare with the method applied in science?
9. What did Jesus claim about Himself and His mission?
10. What challenge did the Pharisees make concerning His claim?
11. What was Christ's answer?
12. What was Christ's answer to the questions, "Where is thy Father?" and "Who art thou?"
13. What power over life had been given to Jesus by His Father?
14. What is the significant meaning of the parable of the good shepherd?
15. What did Jesus say was the object of His mission?

PROBLEM 45

A SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND PARABLES

Following the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus began what is commonly called His Peraean ministry. This period extended up to the last Passover. It covered a period of about six months. Near the middle of this time, Jesus went to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Dedication. The first half of the period lasted from about September until December, and the latter half from then until April. For the account of what Jesus did while away from Jerusalem, we must look to St. Luke. When in Jerusalem and in Judea, St. John records His acts.

This period is peculiar in that there are few incidents recorded. Most of the record consists of discourses and parables. We cannot be sure of the order of events during this time. In this problem we shall follow the order given by Farrar.

PROBLEM: What were some of the incidents of note that occurred, and what parables and discourses were given during the period from the Feast of Tabernacles to the middle of the Passion Week?

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The call of the Seventy. (Luke 10:1-24)

1. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." (Luke 10:1)

Comment:

The instructions and powers and duties of the Seventy were very similar to those which He had given to the Twelve when He sent them forth. The time was fast approaching for Him to finish His work. He recognized that there was much need for more laborers. Possibly He wanted to keep the Twelve near Him. There was a large district in Peraea wherein little work had been done. It would seem that He planned intensive missionary activities. The Seventy went forth into the cities. Later they "returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." (Luke 10:17)

B.–List of events and parables.

1. The parable of the good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-37)
2. A visit to the home of Mary and Martha. (Luke 10:38-42)
3. Healing of the man born blind. (John, chap. 9)
4. Christ at the Feast of Dedication. (John 10:22-42)
5. "Teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1-4)
6. Invited to dine with the Pharisee. (Luke 11:37-54)
7. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees." (Luke 12:1-7)
8. Galileans slain by Pilate. (Luke 13:1-9)
9. Healing of the woman sick eighteen years. (Luke 13:10-17)
10. "Are there few that be saved?" (Luke 13:22-30)
11. Warning against Herod. (Luke 13:31-35)
12. Discourse at the home of chief Pharisee. (Luke 14:1-24)
13. Counting the cost. (Luke 14:25-35)
14. Parable of the great supper. (Luke 14:16-24)
15. Three parables of grace. (Luke 15)
16. Two parables of warning. (Luke 16)
17. Raising of Lazarus. (John 11:1-46)
18. Withdrawal to Ephraim. (John 11:47-54)
19. The healing of the ten lepers. (Luke 17:11-19)
20. Blessing little children. (Luke 18:15-17)

21. The rich young ruler. (Luke 18:18-30)
22. He foretells His crucifixion. (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34)
23. Healing of the blind man near Jericho. (Luke 18:35-43)
24. Visit to Zacchaeus, the rich publican. (Luke 19:1-10)
25. Parable of the ten pounds. (Luke 19:11-28)
26. At the home of Simon the leper in Bethany. (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-11)

C.–The second series of parables.

1. The two debtors. (Luke 7:40)
2. The lost sheep.)
3. The lost coin.) (Luke 15)
4. The lost son.)
5. Children of the bride-chamber. (Matt. 9:14-17)
6. Lowest place at the wedding feast. (Luke 14:7-11)
7. The great supper. (Luke 14:16)
8. The good Samaritan. (Luke 10:29)
9. The unrighteous steward. (Luke 16:1)
10. The rich man and Lazarus. (Luke 16:19)
11. The unmerciful servant. (Matt. 18:23-35)

D.–Third series. (Prophetic or Judicial Parables)

1. Children in the market place. (Matt. 11:16-17)
2. The barren fig tree. (Luke 13:6-9)
3. Two sons of the wicked husbandman. (Matt. 21:28-44)
4. Marriage of the king's son. (Matt. 22:1-14)
5. The unfaithful servant. (Matt. 24:45-51)
6. The ten virgins. (Matt. 25:1-13)

Comment:

The limits of this book make it impossible for us to consider the numerous events and parables and discourses which filled the latter part of Christ's ministry. We felt it desirable on the other hand to list at least some of the important things for the purpose of general orientation. We can discuss only a few of them.

Generally speaking, the parables of Jesus were given during three periods of His ministry; namely, (1) those following the first organized opposition of the Pharisees, (2) those given during what is called His Peraean ministry, (3) and those given particularly during the Passion Week. The parables and events which we have listed above do not, however, correspond to this grouping altogether.

E.–A parable considered.

1. "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)
2. Christ asked him a question in return.
   " . . . What is written in the law? how readest thou?"
3. The lawyer's answer.
   " . . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."
4. Christ's reply.
   " . . . Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live."
5. The lawyer was anxious to make an excuse for himself.
   " . . . And who is my neighbour?" he asked.
6. Christ answered in parable.
   "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place,

came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. . . . . . Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?"

7. His answer.
   " . . . He that shewed mercy on him."
8. Only one answer was now possible.
   ". . . Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke 10: 25-37)

Comment:

The lawyer repeated the commandments which formed part of the daily exercise of all Jews. They no doubt were written on parchment and carried in the phylacteries, which were worn on the forehead or on the arm of every Jewish boy. Later, during the Passion Week, Christ, Himself, declared them to be the very basic commandments, the ones upon which all the Law and the Prophets depended.

It seems evident, however, that Christ knew this man had not observed the commandments. There is a great difference between knowing and doing, between saying words and applying their meaning in life. Should we examine ourselves we venture the suggestion that every one of us would discover that we know more than we apply. The reckless driver knows better, but takes the chance; we know certain principles of sanitation, yet often fail to be sanitary; the farmer knows the damage of weeds, still he permits them to grow.

Knowledge may be a passive virtue. If it is to become a power in life, it must move muscles and brain and the soul of man. This is the key to progress, to righteousness, and is the way to life. The final implication of Christ's answer is, not who is my neighbor, but whose neighbor am I.

F.–Further study.

If time permits the following parables would be very profitable material:

1. The parables of the lost sheep; of the lost coin; of the lost son. (Luke 15)
2. The rich man and poor Lazarus. (Luke 16:19-31)
3. The prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-32)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Seventy.

1. What duty did He assign to them? what instructions did He give? and what power was granted unto them?
2. Can you determine any reason or need for Christ's calling the Seventy?

B.–Parables listed.

1. In the list of parables and discourses, list three or four of the most important.

C.–A parable considered.

1. What question did the lawyer present to Christ?
2. What counter question did Christ ask? what was the answer?
3. What do you think was the chief purpose in the mind of Jesus when He gave this parable?
4. As applied to our problem, what is the chief lesson to be learned from it?

Note: This problem has been written for reference and orientation. Do not attempt to study it in detail.

Problem 46

PREPARING THE APOSTLES FOR HIS DEATH

During the past six months Jesus had repeatedly referred to His death; but His Apostles, more than likely, had never made a complete adjustment to the idea, and even at this time hoped that some change would come.

Problem: What attempts had Christ made to prepare His Apostles for His death? Why?

Bible References: Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22. Matt. 17:22-23; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44; Matt. 20:18-28; Mark 10:32-45; Luke 18:31-34; Matt. 26:2.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ prepares His disciples.

1. His first prediction of His death.

"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. 16:21)

Comment:

This prediction we referred to when discussing the events following immediately after Peter's confession.

2. His second attempt to explain His passion.

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men;

"And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." (Matt. 17:22-23) St. Mark adds: "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." (Mark 9:32) St. Luke makes a similar statement. (Luke 9:44)

Comment:

This second attempt to prepare His disciples for future events occurred in Galilee. After the Transfiguration, Jesus had led them back to Capernaum. There they remained some little time before going to the Feast of Tabernacles. It was during this period that He spoke the above words.

3. The third prediction.

Some six months had passed. He saw it was now time to begin His last journey to Jerusalem. While on the way "he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again." (Mark 10:32-34)

Comment:

Although even at this late date in His ministry, they were still unable to realize the fact that He must die, yet some of them understood enough to arouse within them smoldering ambitions of personal advantages. One of the most worthy lessons which Jesus taught His disciples grew out of this incident.

B.–The question of leadership answered.

1. "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, (and St. Matthew informs us that their mother also) came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire."

" . . . Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." (Mark 10:35, 37)

2. Christ answered.

   After questioning if they were able to drink of the "cup" which He would drink of, and having received their answer in the affirmative, He replied, "But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." (Mark 10:40)

Comment:

This emphasizes again the fact that these Apostles were following Jesus partly, at least, for personal ambitions, and had not yet caught the spirit of His mission and of His teachings. When the news of such a question reached the other Apostles, they were much displeased; and again the spirit of contention stirred the hearts of this selected group.

3. Christ explained the true spirit of leadership.

   "But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

   "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

   "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

   "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45)

Comment:

Thus it is that leadership in His kingdom meant, "greatness in service, not greatness through service." Neither does leadership mean greatness through office nor through authority. Leadership implies richness in aid, in help, in love, in service to man, to God. Even Christ's leadership in the world is due in no small way to the great service He gave, that of laying down His life as a ransom for mankind, that immortality and eternal life might be made effective. Offices and authority are means through which service is effected.

The spirit back of His attempts to explain His suffering to His Apostles was one of service and love. While He was burdened with His own great problems, His thoughts were of them, to conserve their faith, to soften their disappointment, until they were able to catch the spirit of what His mission was and meant to the world, so that they might the better be able to carry on the work when He had to leave.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The predictions of His death.

1. Under what circumstances and where did Jesus make His first attempt to explain His suffering and death?
2. Explain a second attempt to make it clear.
3. When and where was a third attempt made?
4. Did His disciples understand?

B.–The question of leadership.

1. What was the request of James and John and their mother?
2. Why do you think that they presented such question?
3. What was Christ's reply concerning His right to grant their request?
4. What is the true spirit of leadership? and upon what does the true spirit of lordship and rule depend?
5. How shall one obtain greatness in leadership and magnify authority?
6. By what means did Christ become the greatest leader the world has ever known?

PROBLEM 47

PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST

Clouds of dust lined the roads leading into Jerusalem. It was the dust of companies of people and caravans coming to the Holy City for the great Passover Feast. These came from the east, from Bablyon and Assyria; those came from Damascus; still others from various provinces and cities of Greece and Rome; some came from far-off Egypt. Then, too, from every city and village of Palestine came company after company who joined those from greater distances. Thus the thoroughfares leading from all the known nations, and those particularly of Palestine, were filled with heavy traffic. Some of the companies had started early, and had already arrived in Jerusalem. Others were far back along the road. But all had planned to arrive on the day when the Paschal Lamb would be selected.

PROBLEM: What conditions did the leaders among the Jews permit in and around the Temple precincts during the Passover Feast?

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Attendance.

1. The Passion Week began on Sunday, the tenth day of the Month Nisan, or April 2nd according to our calendar. It was about the time of the Jewish New Year. This Passion Feast, we will remember, began on Thursday and was held in commemoration of the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. (Ex. 12: 1-10) All adult male Jews were required to attend for the purpose of presenting themselves before the Lord, of offering sacrifice, and of mak-

ing proper contributions to the treasury. Some of the Rabbis, particularly Hillel, encouraged women also to attend this feast, if no other during the year. We can readily imagine the great crowds of people that surged through the streets of Jerusalem. Josephus tells us that innumerable multitudes were in attendance. Some authors contend that at times as many as two million people swarmed the streets and environs of the Holy City. Where could entertainment be found? Some found places in Jerusalem, some in the surrounding villages, and the majority camped round about the city. Those who arrived late must have had to pitch their little tents far up on the foothills, and out even beyond Mount Olivet.

B.–Preparation for the Feast.

The shepherds led their flocks toward the enclosures near the Temple. Such sheep had been carefully raised and selected. They had to be without blemish, for they were to be offered as sacrifices upon the proper day of the feast. When we think of the number of families of Jews in attendance, and then remember that each family was required to make a sacrifice and eat of the paschal lamb, we can well imagine that it took thousands upon thousands of sheep to supply the needs. Cattle, too, and numerous doves were required. Thus, as the feast approached, the temple precincts were full of sheep and cattle and doves, from which the people were to make their selection of sacrificial victims.

C.–The money-changers.

1. People who had come from all the known na-

tions brought with them, of course, their foreign coins upon which were heathen symbols. Such coins had to be exchanged for the Jewish shekel and half-shekel, for no sacrifice could be purchased with foreign coin. To make matters more convenient, it had become customary for the Sanhedrin to grant money-changers the right to place their tables and desks within the temple precincts where they would be handy for the exchange to be made on the first day of the feast, when by law the heads of families would come to select and pay for the sacrificial animals.

D.–Scene on Thursday.

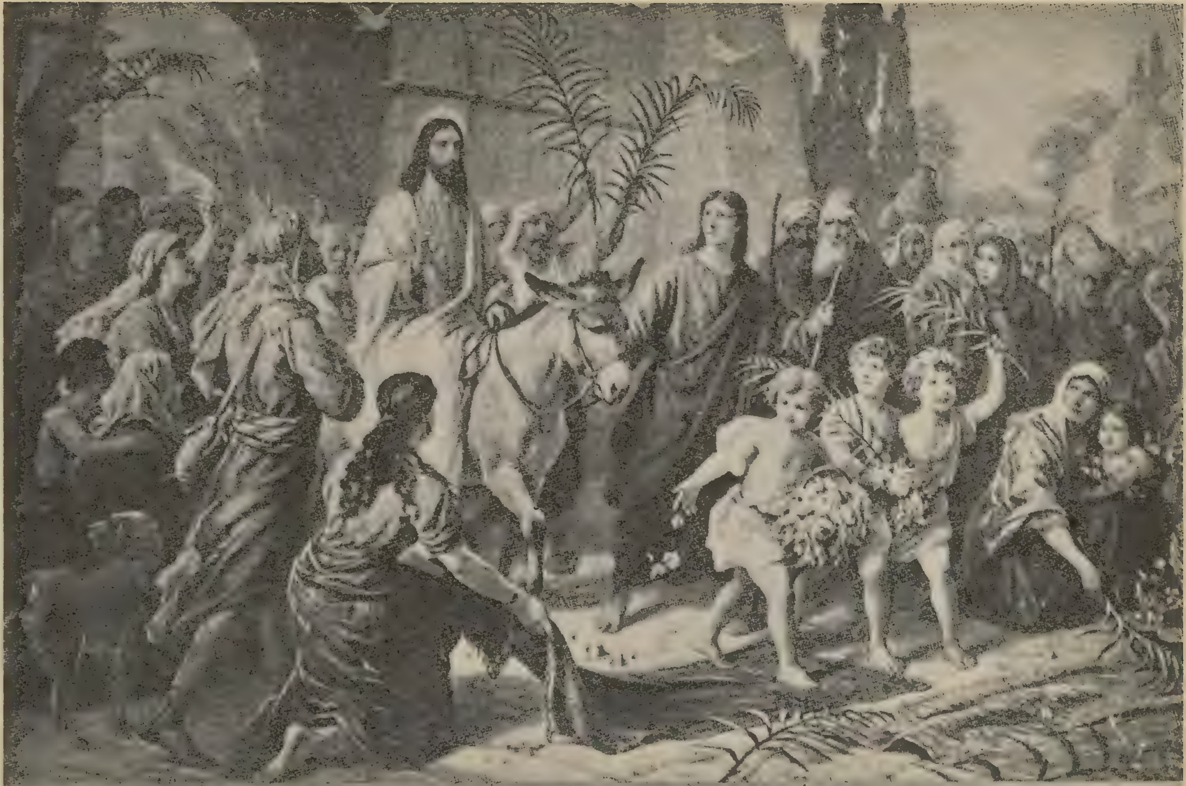
1. After this had been done, the animals were kept near until the following Thursday, when again they were brought back within the temple precincts for sacrifice. Can you imagine the scene? Throngs of people came to the Temple for their lambs, which, of course, had to be slain and prepared. Tens of thousands of animals had to be sacrificed. Blood ran like water through the gutters. It was a day of butchering and burning. Thousands of priests were on duty. Priests stood in long lines and passed vessels of blood from one to the other up to the altar. There were priests everywhere busy with a hundred and one ceremonial duties.
2. Farrar (Vol. 2, p. 207) adds his picture of the conditions which prevailed:
   "Greed had won the battle against reverence; the tessellated floors and pillared colonades of the court of the Gentiles had been again usurped by droves of oxen and sheep, and dove sellers and userers, and its whole precincts were dirty with driven cattle, and echoed to the hum of bargaining voices and the clink of gold."
   In the name of religion this condition prevailed:

The House of Prayer defiled by dirt and by greed! The Temple of the Lord made a center for usury!

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Condition at Jerusalem.

1. When did the Passover Feast begin? what did it commemorate?
2. Who was required to attend?
3. How many people crowded into Jerusalem and and its environs?
4. Before the feast, what arrangement would have to be made for the animals about to be sacrificed?
5. Why was it necessary for the people to make change at the Temple?
6. Describe the conditions which prevailed in and around the Temple.



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CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

Problem 48

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

When the time for the Passover Feast arrived, Jesus, like the thousands described in the previous problem, made preparations to attend. "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished." (Luke 18:31). This little group joined the throngs and proceeded toward Jerusalem. We might well imagine His parting words to be similar to those which He said earlier:

> "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."
>
> "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." (Matt. 11:21, 23)

Rejected not only by His own kinsmen but by the people of His beloved Galilee, He set His face toward Jerusalem to accomplish His sacrifice. From Peraea He forded the Jordan for the last time and then began the climb up to Jerusalem. He passed through Jericho, where He was entertained by Zacchaeus and where He healed the blind Bartimaeus. Finally, on Friday evening, He and His Apostles arrived in Bethany at the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

"The chronology of events during the last week of our Lord's life supports the generally accepted belief that in this year, the 14th day of Nisan, on which the Passover festival began, fell on Thursday; and this being so, the day on which Jesus reached Bethany, was the preceding Friday, the eve of the Jewish Sabbath." (Talmage, p. 510)

Christ spent His last Sabbath in the home of friends He loved. "The Gospel-writers have drawn a veil of reverent silence over the events of that day." (Talmage, p. 511) But when the first three stars appeared Saturday evening the Sabbath was at an end. Immediately there was a busy stir in the home of Simon the leper. "There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him." (John 12:2)

The news that Jesus was at Bethany had spread among the people, so they came as customary uninvited guests to see Jesus and Lazarus as well. "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead." (John 12:9) The whole affair angered the chief priests and they even plotted to kill Lazarus, for people believed on Jesus because of him.

During the supper Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, which was very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus. This brought forth a complaint from Judas:

> "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"
>
> "Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this."
> (John 12:5, 7)

When the Sabbath had passed, Jesus made preparations to continue His journey to Jerusalem early Sunday morning.

PROBLEM: What significance may be ascribed to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem?

Bible References: Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Triumphal Entry.

1. For many months Christ had consistently withdrawn from public demonstrations, a fact which His own disciples and even John the Baptist could not understand. At the feeding of the five thousand He had crushed what would likely have been a great demonstration to make Him King, and then He had withdrawn into heathen lands. But now His work was nearing completion. He had announced definitely that He would be taken by His enemies during this visit. There was, therefore, no longer any need to guard against open conflict with the Pharisees. In fact, it seemed imperative that He should make an open demonstration in one last great pageant—a public declaration of His Messiahship.

"And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

"Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me." (Matt. 21:1-2)

Comment:

In sending for this colt a well-known prophecy was fulfilled.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zech. 9:9)

Had He chosen to enter Jerusalem riding upon a horse, it would have symbolized war and pride, a Messiah of a political kingdom. But to enter riding upon an ass symbolized peace and humility, the characteristics of His mission which from the temptation He had followed. We can well imagine that by this time news of His approach had passed along the way. No doubt such tidings would spread the faster, for many people wondered if Jesus would attend the Passover in view of the well-known plot of the Pharisees to kill Him. Gossip would fly like the wind. In the beginning, the people who lived in Jerusalem did not know what was happening. But, as we indicated in the previous lesson, the districts surrounding Jerusalem must have been crowded with people from all the known nations. These, no doubt, had heard of Jesus and His miracles. Particularly was this true of the multitudes from Galilee. The recent miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead had aroused anew, faith in Jesus. Thus all along the crowded highway leading to Jerusalem, excitement and enthusiasm marked the spirit of the multitudes.

2. The disciples return with the colt.

"And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

"And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

"And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen;

"Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." (Luke 19:35-38)

Comment:

No wonder His disciples were thrilled. Instead of a policy of apparent procrastination, Jesus now adopted aggressive demonstration. The downcast little group of Apostles must have revived anew their hope that Jesus was about to establish His Messianic Kingdom.

The waiting multitudes likewise caught the spirit, and wondered if at last their long-expected Messiah had appeared in the prophet of Nazareth.

3. The multitudes' response.

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9)

Comment:

The enthusiasm grew all along the way. People unwrapped their loose cloaks and spread them along the road. This was an extraordinary token of respect. It was not an unknown token. Plutarch says of Cato the younger that "he was escorted not with prayers . . . nor with praises, but with tears . . . the people spread their garments under his feet." (Dummelow, p. 693) As Jesus proceeded, others leaped to the trees which grew along the roadside. From these they broke off branches and threw them in the path for His donkey to walk upon. The shouts and singing of Hosanna spread like fire to the very gates of Jerusalem, and even within the city the noise and din of the enthusiasm could be heard.

4. The Pharisees complained.

"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." (John 12:19)

"And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples." (Luke 19:39)

5. Christ answered.

He had remained silent until now, evidently watching with approval the great demonstration. When this complaint came in the midst of the enthusiasm, He with righteous indignation replied:

"I tell you, that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40)

6. As they proceeded along the way, He came into full view of the great city of Jerusalem.
"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it." (Luke 19:41)

Comment:

He knew that enemies would soon destroy it, and that the people would be made to suffer greatly.

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

"And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Luke 19:43-44)

Within fifty years this prophecy was fulfilled. Titus marched upon Jerusalem, burnt the Temple, massacred the Jews, and laid waste the city.

As Christ wept, no doubt the thoughts, which he later voiced, concerning Jerusalem affected His soul:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:37-38)

7. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
"And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?
"And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." (Matt. 21:10-11)

B.–General Summary.

Some have suggested that Christ Himself expected through this demonstration that the people would receive Him as the Messiah. But in the light of His repeated statement that He must be killed, this idea cannot be accepted. Others suggest that He permitted the demonstration "as an apparent concession to His disciples" who were discouraged at His procrastination. This, too, seems to be a mistaken view. On the contrary, it would seem that this great pageant was an "integral part of the history of Christ, an actual Royal Entry into the Holy City of the long expected Messiah of the Jews." He was their King, the royal descendant of David. This great parable in action was a "public assertion of His Messiahship and a claim to national acknowledgment." (Edersheim)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Triumphal Entry.

1. At this time, how was Christ received in Galilee and Peraea?
2. What woe may he have spoken over cities in Galilee?
3. Where did Christ likely spend His last Sabbath?
4. When on the way to Jerusalem Sunday morning, what preparation was made for Christ to enter the city?
5. What prophet foretold this event?
6. What would it have signified if he had ridden a horse? What did entering on a donkey signify?
7. Describe what the disciples and the multitude did as Jesus proceeded toward Jerusalem.
8. What complaint did the Pharisees make?
9. What was Christ's answer?
10. As He beheld the city, how did He feel and what prophecy may have entered His mind?
11. What is the significant aspect of His triumphal entry?
12. Why might it not have been omitted?

Problem 49

A PROTEST AGAINST PROFITEERING IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

After Christ's triumphal entry He did not parade the streets of Jerusalem, but rode directly into the Temple courts. The scene which met His eyes was partly described in Problem 47. We might summarize briefly in review. The whole Temple precincts were dirty with driven cattle and sheep, and within the Temple courts sat the money-changers, and those who bought and sold animals.

Problem: When Christ looked about the Temple and saw the real condition of affairs, what was it that aroused His anger most, and caused Him to drive the traffickers out?

Bible References: Matt. 21:12-13; Mark 11:11, 15-16; Luke 19:45-46.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ cleanses the Temple.

1. St. Mark's account.

"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve." (Mark 11:11)

Comment:

Both St. Matthew and St. Luke indicate that Jesus did not wait until the next day, Monday, to cleanse the Temple; but that right after His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, He drove the money-changers out. The psychology of the situation would lead us to favor the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Luke. But the important thing is that He drove the usurers out. The people were at this time for Him, and had sung Hosannas to His name all along the way since He passed the Mount of Olives. The priests were therefore powerless at this time to hinder Him. Again, it would seem most natural for Jesus to be stirred with anger when He rode into the Temple courts and beheld the traffic. We can hardly imagine that He would have permitted the condition to continue longer without protest.

2. St. Matthew's account.

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; "And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matt. 21:12-13. See also Jer. 7:11)

Comment:

a. A few facts about the Temple traffic will aid the answer to our problem. First a word about the money-changers. They were likely regularly accredited and duly authorized to make exchange. Every Jew and proselyte—women, slaves, and minors excepted—had to pay the annual Temple tribute of half a shekel, or about twenty-eight cents in our money. Besides the various coins of Palestine, there circulated throughout the country Persian, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman coins. For a month before the feast these money-changers opened up booths in every country town; but when the pilgrims began to arrive in Jerusalem for the Passover, the booths in the towns and cities were closed, and reopened within the Temple precincts. It was a profitable business. Thousands upon thousands of Jews had to make proper change. The money-changers charged from one and a half to two cents on every half shekel. Should the person desire to present money in value equal to two half shekels, he was charged double. Again, it was not so easy to determine the value of coins, for they were not all standard weight. Thus, when coins were weighed and deduction made, we can picture the arguing, disputing, and bargaining that filled the courts of the Temple. The house of prayer really became an eastern mart with its attendant evils.

b. The traffic connected with the purchase of the sacrificial animals presented a much more scandalous condition. Of course, people coming from far distant countries could not bring the needed sacrificial animals with them. These had to be purchased in Jerusalem or its environs. We are all well acquainted with the fact that animals for sacrifice had to be perfect. There were regular examiners who were permitted to charge one and a fourth to two cents for inspection. But a great deal of trouble occurred because of lack of proper regulation. This could be avoided if there were a market within the Temple enclosure where animals could be bought, which had already been inspected and paid for. Service always costs money. Private individuals as well as the priesthood profited. This was customary. But was there at the time of Christ a condition which made this traffic especially obnoxious?

c. This Temple-market was without doubt "what in Rabbinic writings is styled 'the Bazaars of the sons of Annas' the sons of that High-Priest Annas, who is so infamous in New Testament history." (Edersheim) One of the vicious things about the traffic was this: "the Bazaars of the sons of Annas" virtually controlled the traffic. Should a person purchase an animal in the booths which were known to have been opened without the city, particularly on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, the animal could be rejected when it was presented to the priest examiner within the Temple. There was, without doubt, such a working relationship between the resident leaders and High-Priestly family and some of the officers. Such a condition made possible a system of profiteering which was vicious in the extreme. There was virtually a "ring" of money-changers, examiners, and leading residential Temple-officials who were in the "game", the purpose of which was to fleece the poor people who were helpless in the strange city among the crowding multitudes.

d. The unrighteousness of the "traffic carried on in the Bazaars, and the greed of their owners", made the Temple-market very unpopular. "This appears, not only from the conduct and words of the Patriarch Simeon and of Baba ben Buta, but from the fact that popular indignation, three years before the destruction of Jerusalem, swept away the Bazaars of the family of Annas, and that, as expressly stated, on account of the sinful greed which characterized their dealings." (Edersheim, Vol. I, pp. 371-372) The Talmud also records the curse which a distinguished Rabbi of Jerusalem (Abba Shaul) pronounced upon the High-Priestly family (including that of Annas), who were "themselves High Priests, their sons treasurers, their sons-in-law assistant-treasurers, while their servants beat the people with sticks." (Edersheim, Vol. I, p. 372)

B.–What Christ objected to.

1. Although the traffic which was carried on made the Temple courts and precincts most unsanitary, yet it was not of this that Jesus complained. He saw the profiteering, the greed, the "fleecing" and oppression of the poor people. This it was that defiled the Temple and caused Him to say: "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Thus it was that He forever put a ban on the commercialization of religion and priestly profiteering in the name of God.

C.–Why the cleansing of the Temple was permitted.

1. We are now the better prepared to understand how it was that Jesus was able to clear the Temple of the profiteers without being arrested. They were but hirelings of the priestly family. Again, there was a strong public sentiment against the condition, both from the people and from the better class of Rabbis and Pharisees. Fur-

thermore, the people at this time had with great enthusiasm renewed their faith in Jesus. Thus Christ's action would receive the approval of the masses, and many who did not believe in Him would gladly stand aside while He accomplished the cleansing—a thing which they desired; for they realized that the house of prayer had been usurped by a den of profiteers.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Christ cleanses the Temple.

1. What did Jesus do when He beheld the conditions that prevailed in the Temple?
2. How much was charged for changing money?
3. What was bad about the system?
4. What was vicious about the profiteering on the sale of animals?
5. Who did this profiteering?
6. How could they profiteer?
7. What did the better class of Jews and Rabbis think of this condition?
8. What finally happened to the system?

B.–What Christ objected to.

1. Of all the conditions that prevailed, what was it that Jesus thought defiled the Temple most?

C.–Why the cleansing of the Temple was permitted.

1. What does His cleansing the Temple mean?

PROBLEM 50

BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

After having forced the money-changers out of the Temple courts, it would have been very unsafe for Jesus to have remained over night in Jerusalem. It has been suggested (Farrar) that although He went back toward Bethany, He did not enter into the village; but, turning aside, sought shelter with His disciples in the olive groves near the village, so that His whereabouts might be the more secret.

By Tuesday, the third day of the Passion Week, the Pharisees had no doubt decided in council to take Jesus, but not during the feast for fear of the people. During the time, however, they must in some way or other cause Him to say something by which they might find excuse to accuse Him.

PROBLEM: What schemes did they pursue in order to entrap Jesus?

Bible References: Matt. 21:23-46; Luke 20:1-8; Mark 11:27-33; 12:1-12.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–By what authority?

1. "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. 21:23)

Comment:

The membership of the Sanhedrin was made up of priests, scribes, and elders. The fact that these men presented the question indicates that they came representing the Sanhedrin. If this was the case, it is certain that the great council had been in session for the purpose of determining what might be done with Jesus, who was then gaining the people through His bold and fearless teachings.

In a previous problem we discussed this same question of authority. But then the problem occurred in connection with His power to heal, which some falsely claimed He did through evil powers. The question was now a broader one. Christ had not only healed people but He had driven the money-changers out of the booths in the Temple court, and this in face of the permission of the Sanhedrin. Thus He had exerted authority over the acts of the greatest council of the Jews. By what right did He do such a thing, and who gave Him the right? Of course they knew that the Sanhedrin had not given the authority, and furthermore that no Rabbi had laid his hands on Jesus and ordained Him to such power.

2. Christ presents a question.

   "And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

   "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Matt. 21:24-25)

3. They reasoned among themselves.

   "And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

   "But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

   "And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell." (Matt. 21:25-27)

4. Christ likewise answered.

   "And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." (Matt. 21:27)

   a. Do you think Christ's method here a fair one? Why?

B.–Christ explained the situation in parable.

1. "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.
   "He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went.
   "And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.
   "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" (Matt. 21:28-31)
2. The Pharisees' answer.
   "They say unto him, The first." (Matt. 21:31)
3. Christ reproved them.
   "Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
   "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." (Matt. 21:31-32)

C.–By way of answer to their question, "Who gave thee this authority?" He gave another parable.

1. "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:
   "And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.
   "And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.
   "Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

"But, last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

"But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

"And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

"When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" (Matt. 21:33-40)

2. Their answer.

   "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." (Matt. 21:41)

3. Christ now was ready to answer their question of authority.

   "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

   "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21: 42-43)

Comment:

Through this parable Christ gave a forceful answer to their questions. In it He virtually claimed to have been sent by God to this people. But God had previously sent servants such as the prophets and Moses, some of whom they had killed. But He placed Himself above them all, as the Son of the Householder, the very heir of His possessions. Thus His authority to do the things complained of had come, not from the Rabbis, not from the Sanhedrin, but from God, a claim which He had consistently made throughout His mission.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–By what authority?

1. When Christ entered the Temple early in the morning, who came to present a problem?
2. Why did they present such a question?
3. What wager did Jesus make with them? What question did He ask?
4. What was their answer? Why?
5. What was Christ's direct answer?
6. What parable did He give to answer His question about John? What did He teach thereby?
7. What parable did He give to answer the problem of authority? Show how this parable explained His claim to authority.
8. From whence came His authority?

PROBLEM 51

A QUESTION OF TRIBUTE

When the representatives of the Sanhedrin were so masterfully foiled in their attempt to involve Jesus in difficulty with the religious leaders, they cast about to find, if possible, a way to bring Him in conflict with the authority of Caesar. Rome was very jealous of her power; Pilate was a more or less reckless tyrant; and Herod Antipas was unscrupulous. Besides, Herod was very desirous to keep and even strengthen his rule and power. Should Jesus make any statement of slight or claim against the authority of any one of them, it would prove fatal. If Christ had by any word placed Himself on the side of the "Nationalist" party, He would have quickly perished, like Judas of Galilee. Knowing the probable value of their plot, it was now the purpose of the Sanhedrinists to entrap Jesus with the civil authorities.

PROBLEM: Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?

Bible References: Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:21-26.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The plot.

1. "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

   "And they sent out unto him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men.

   "Tell us therefore, What thinketh thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" (Matt. 22:15-17)

Comment:

We note that the well-known Pharisees, whom Jesus would have at once distrusted, did not come with the question, but that they sent their younger disciples who might appear as conscientious men. These united with the Herodians, who were partisans supporting the rule of Herod as an occupant of the Jewish throne. It might be said at this time that the Pharisees did not have any too much love for Herod, but were evidently willing to unite with his adherents as common enemies of Jesus.

Judas of Galilee had founded the party known as the Zealots, who were extremely nationalistic, and might at any moment, if opportunity afforded, have thrown off the yoke of any foreign power. They held that "Israel being a theocracy, and God the only King, it was unlawful to pay tribute to any foreign power." (Dummelow, p. 697) This class of the Jews were what their name implies, exceedingly zealous and fanatical concerning their belief. They consequently had stirred up the people against paying tribute to any hated foreign power.

If Jesus would now advocate the paying of tribute, the people might reject Him. On the other hand, if He forbade them to pay tribute, He would immediately be trapped in difficulty with the Herods and with Caesar. The question was, therefore, like a dagger; it cut both ways.

2. Christ's clear insight.

"But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

"Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

"And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

"They say unto him, Caesar's." (Matt. 22:18-21)

3. Christ's famous answer.

"Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21)

4. The result.
   "When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way." (Matt. 22:22)

Comment:

The suddenness with which they left indicates how completely they were routed. The question had not only been answered, but the Herodians had received an indirect chastisement. They, being members chiefly of a political party, cared little for God and religion. Jesus found opportunity in the midst of His opposition to instruct them to render "unto God the things that are God's."

Indirectly we have learned from this answer that there need be no conflict between Church and State. Each institution is necessary. Each should receive its proper support. Only care should be taken to keep them separate. Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The new plot.

1 What question was now presented by the Pharisees and Herodians?
2. Why was their question dangerous?
3. What was Christ's answer?
4. What were the results?
5. Indirectly what would Christ's answer teach us about Church and State?
6. During the centuries which have passed what trouble has been caused by not following Christ's advice?

PROBLEMS 52 AND 53

THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS

The previous two attempts to ensnare Jesus occurred on Tuesday, the third day of the Passion Week. After making answer to the plots which we have just studied, Jesus continued teaching in the Temple. It was not long before the Sadducees came with a question. It was not a dangerous one. Their purpose seems to have been to throw Jesus into disrepute. The question we might describe as one of "stock-in-trade." It had, no doubt, been frequently propounded, and it had caused no little trouble and debate for the Pharisees. The sincerity of the question might well be challenged. Christ, however, treated it with respect and used the occasion to explain what to Him was, after all, the central purpose of His mission—to establish immortality.

PROBLEMS: What idea did Christ express concerning human immortality?
"Which is the great commandment in the law?"

Bible References: Matt. 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27.
Matt. 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-34.

PROBLEMS CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Saddducees attempted to throw Jesus into disrepute.

1. Their question.

"Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

"Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

"Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying, left no seed.

"And the second took her, and died; neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

"And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

"In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife." (Mark 12:18-23)

Comment:

Observe that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. Therefore the question partakes of the spirit of ridicule. There are good grounds for doubting whether such a case as the seven brothers actually existed. More than likely this was merely an imaginary case. It was true, however, that Moses had given the law for a brother to marry his brother's widow. (Deut. 25:5) It was sometimes referred to as the Levirate marriage, which at the time of Christ was falling into disrepute, and by 200 A. D. the Mishnah had recommended that it be abandoned.

Now as regards the resurrection, the Pharisees believed in it, though the various Rabbis were not agreed as to just what would take place in the resurrection. They went into detail and thus involved themselves in endless controversy. For example, some contended that a person would be resurrected with his clothes on. (Sanh. 90 b) Others taught that one would be resurrected just as he was laid down, with all the bodily defects such as blindness, deafness, etc.

2. Christ's answer.

"And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

"For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

"And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

"He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err." (Mark 12:24-27)

Comment:

Christ opposed the disbelief of the Sadducees and gave us the idea that God is God of men with immortal souls; that though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, yet their spirits lived. His argument was in favor of "human immortality". God is "God of the living." Thus Jesus declared to the world the reality of the principle of immortality.

3. The result.

"And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine." (Matt. 22:33)

B.–A second problem was then quickly presented to him.

1. Which commandment is greatest?

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt. 22:35-36)

Comment:

The question was designed as a trap. It was framed by a lawyer who believed if a question were rightly put, Christ could be caught.

The teaching of Rabbis was that the "light" commandments were as binding as the "heavy", and that one commandment was not to carry greater reward than another. (See Edersheim) It seems, however, that the question implied a broader meaning. It went beyond contemporary explanations, and desired to know the most fundamental commandment.

2. Christ's answer.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (See Deut. 6:5)

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:37-40)

Comment:

The first of these commandments was the one which the Jews called the Shema. Early in our study we referred to this. You will remember that every Jewish boy was required to learn it, and to repeat it daily. The second will be found in Leviticus 19.

Thus, with masterful insight, Jesus taught them the two most fundamental conceptions in all religion: the first, man's duty to God; and the second, man's duty to man. Love should characterize all our dealings. Upon this principle all other laws and principles depend. These are the root principles of religious and moral life.

C.–Christ forcefully challenged the traditionalism of the Pharisees.

Thus, during the last day that Christ would ever work in the Temple, and teach the people publicly, His opponents continued to hector Him with dangerous and controversial questions. When they were all through and no one presented any more questions, then Jesus began His arraignment of the weaknesses of the Pharisees and their traditionalism.

Do you feel that Jesus was justified in denouncing them? Would He, by doing so, aid the people the better to guard against their follies? He had suffered greatly from their opposition, but the more so because of the thought that they misled the people and made traditionalism of more weight than truth. We usually think of Christ as peaceful and meek and lowly. We saw Him, however, when He cleansed the Temple in righteous indignation, where strong men dared not oppose. Now again in a masterful way He denounced the Pharisees, and with vigorous language disclosed to them and to the world the eight weaknesses of Rabbinism. If you are interested in this last public discourse, read Matthew, chapter 23.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Sadducees attempt to bring Jesus into disrepute.

1. What question did they present?
2. Were they sincere or not? Why?
3. What did some of the Pharisees think about the resurrection?
4. What was Christ's answer to their problem?
5. What did He teach with respect to immortality?

B.–The greatest commandment.

1. A lawyer who believed he could frame a question which would likely entrap Jesus, now presented a problem. What was it?
2. Why was there danger in his question?
3. What was Christ's answer?

C.–Christ's challenge.

1. Did you read Matt. 23 chapter?
2. Do you feel that Christ was justified in denouncing Phariseeism? Why?
3. Of what use could His denouncement be to mankind?

Problem 54

NO MAN KNOWS

Weary with the contention, Christ, after His denunciation of the Pharisees, left the people in the porches of the Temple and ascended the flight of steps which led from the terrace into the Temple building. It was lawful to sit down upon these steps, so Christ sat Himself down to rest. His position was near and overlooking the treasury. While sitting there, He watched people coming and going, bringing their contributions. There were trumpet-shaped boxes arranged and labeled so that people might contribute to that fund which best suited them. Many who were rich gave much. Finally, a poor widow came and cast in her "mite" (one-eighth of a cent).

> "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
>
> "For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." (Mark 12:43-44)

This was the last recorded incident of Christ's work in the Temple. He taught by it that God values love more than material things. Then Jesus left the Temple for the last time. As He and His Apostles closed the gate and stood without, one of them said:

> "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!
>
> "And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Mark 13:1-2)

Problem: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Bible References: Matt. 24:3-51; 25:1-46; Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:4-28.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The signs of the end of the world and of His coming.

1. The Apostles' question.

"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3)

2. Christ's answer.

a. "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." (Matt. 24: 4-5)

b. Read Matt. 24:6-14.

(1) Wars and rumors of war.
(2) Nations in dispute.
(3) Famine and pestilence.
(4) A period of persecution.
(5) False prophets.
(6) The gospel to be preached in all the world.
(7) Then shall the end come.

c. The signs of Christ's coming. (Matt. 24: 29-31)

(1) A period of tribulation.
(2) Sun darkened.
(3) Stars to fall.
(4) Sign of Son of man to appear in the heaven.
(5) Son to come in the clouds.

(6) To come in power and glory.
(7) Angels to sound great trumpets.

Comment:

The above statements were likely as confusing to His Apostles as they are to us today. Certainly by the above answer they could not tell when the end would come. He bade them "learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." (Matt. 24:32-33)

B.–No man knows.

1. He answers more definitely.
   "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36)

C.–Parables.

1. Watch and be ready.
   a. "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 24:42, 44)
   b. "The kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." (Matt. 25:1-2) Why? (See Matt. 24:3-12) "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 25:13)
   c. Reward for diligence.
   "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.
   "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man accord-

ing to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

"And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.

"After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

The one who had received two talents and had gained two more was likewise rewarded.

"Then he which had received the one talent, came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

"And I was afraid, and went, and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matt. 25:14-21, 24-29)

(For an interpretation of this parable see Dummelow, pp. 706-707.)

D.–Summary.

A general summary of Christ's answers might be stated as follows:

There would be many signs of His coming and of the end. His disciples through the ages were to watch for these indications. But they were to be ready at any time for His coming. Furthermore, while He is away people must progress and improve their talents in order to receive His approval when the end comes.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Signs of the end . . .

1. As they sat on the Mount of Olives, what question did the disciples ask Him?
2. What was Christ's reply?
3. Would it satisfy them? Why?

B.–No man knows.

1. Who knows definitely when the end shall come?

C.–Parables.

1. In the meantime, what must people of each age do?
2. In respect to His answer, what is the meaning of the parable of the ten virgins?
3. What does the parable of the talents signify in regard to His answer?

D.–Summary.

1. Make a summary of His answer to the disciples' question.

PROBLEM 55

PREPARATION FOR THE PASCHAL FEAST

From what we have already observed, the last two working days of Christ's life must have been very busy. They were filled with controversial and dangerous questions; with the work of healing the sick who were brought to the Temple; with parables and discourses and instructions, both to the people and to His own little group of Apostles who were now clinging so closely to Him with foreboding spirits.

Authorities differ here as elsewhere concerning the days upon which this or that happened. We feel certain that on both Tuesday and Wednesday of the Passion Week Christ's strength was taxed to the limit, not alone because of the burden added by the conniving Pharisees, but also because of the problem within His own soul. His suffering He had to bear alone, for as yet no one fully understood. When the days were well spent Jesus said to His disciples:

> "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." (Matt. 26:2)
>
> "And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.
>
> "But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people." (Mark 14:1-2)
>
> "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,
>
> "And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.
>
> "And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." (Matt. 26:14-16)

"The above passages imply Judas was to receive thirty silver shekels, each of which was worth four denarii. If this is so, the sum Judas received would be equivalent to the wages for 120 days' work." (Geo. A. Barton, p. 349) "It was in literal fulfilment of prophecy that they 'weighed out' to him from the very Temple-treasury those thirty pieces of silver (about 3£ 14s)." (About $19.50) (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 477)

Men are never wholly bad. There are some kind words which might be said even about the man who betrayed the Lord. He had been among the first to accept Jesus as the Messiah. In this connection, we feel quite certain that Judas believed in a political Messiah, and subscribed more or less to the common Jewish expectancy concerning the Messiah as King. Consequently the stronger his faith in Jesus became, the less would Judas be able to understand Christ's apparent withdrawals and evident procrastination. From the Transfiguration on, Judas' disappointment seems to have increased. Finally, this spirit so weighed upon him that he complained of some of the things which Jesus did. Note particularly what he said when the woman anointed Christ's feet. (John 12:3-6) Again, from various disputes among the Apostles as to who would be greatest, it would seem that at least one of the things for which they followed Jesus was some personal advantage in a kingdom of the Jews. Now when Christ explained His death to them, and as they came to realize more and more that it must occur, their previous hopes were shattered. Some authors have suggested the idea that Judas believed that if put to the test Jesus would finally demonstrate his Messiahship. Whatever explanation may be made, it seems to us that Judas had loved Christ, but he had fallen into doubt, disappointment, shattered hopes, and selfish ambition. He was not wholly bad, but a victim of a situation and of his own abilities. In saying so much we would not condone his sin, for to betray his Master with a kiss will forever mark him as a traitor to a friend.

PROBLEM: What preparation was made for Christ and His Apostles to eat the Paschal Feast?
Bible References: Matt. 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-20.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Securing a room in which to hold the Paschal Feast.

1. "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" (Matt. 26:17)

2. Christ's reply.

"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." (Matt. 26:18)

Comment:

It is very likely that Jesus had previously spoken to this man about the matter. Authorities believe that the supper was held at the home of the father of John Mark, the man who later became a companion to St. Paul on one of his missionary journeys, and who still later wrote the book of Mark.

It is clear (Mark 14:13) that Jesus did not send all the Apostles to make preparation, but only two of them. St. Luke (22:8) tells us who these men were. "And he sent Peter and John."

B.–The preparation.

1. Securing the lamb.

It is quite likely that Christ and His disciples had followed the custom—had selected the lamb and paid for it before this Thursday when it was to be sacrificed. This would have been the job of Judas as treasurer of the company. Peter and John were simply directed to make it ready. On this day (Thursday) before the incense was burnt for the evening sacrifice, the lambs that had been selected were brought into the temple yards. The people were admitted in three divisions into the Court of the Priests. When the priests gave three blasts from their silver trumpets, it was time for the sacrifice. Each head of a company or family slew his own lamb. The officiating priests stood in two long rows up to the Great Altar. While the sacrifice was going on, the Levites chanted the Hallel.

When the lamb was ready, Peter and John transported it to the prepared room, presumedly at the home of the father of John Mark.

2. Preparation at the room.

When they asked for the room Jesus said:
"And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." (Mark 14:15)

Comment:

It is clear from this passage that the room was furnished. No doubt it contained the couches, table, and all necessary dishes. It was a law that the very poorest must partake of the supper in a reclining posture to symbolize rest, safety, and liberty. However, the Talmud says that it was customary for slaves to eat while standing. From the above account it would appear that all Peter and John had to do was to prepare the Paschal Lamb. They would fasten it on a pomegranate spit and roast it whole. The account in St. Mark that the room was prepared may indicate that their host had arranged for the unleavened cakes, the bitter herbs, the dish with vinegar, the mixture called Charoseth (a compound of nuts, raisins, apples and almonds, etc.), and the wine. Also, the festal lamps would have been trimmed and made ready. If this had not been done, then Peter and John would have had to see to it.

Then toward evening when the sun rested near the western hills, Jesus and His other Apostles for the last time descended the slopes of Mount Olives, entered the Holy City, and proceeded to the prepared room.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Securing the room.

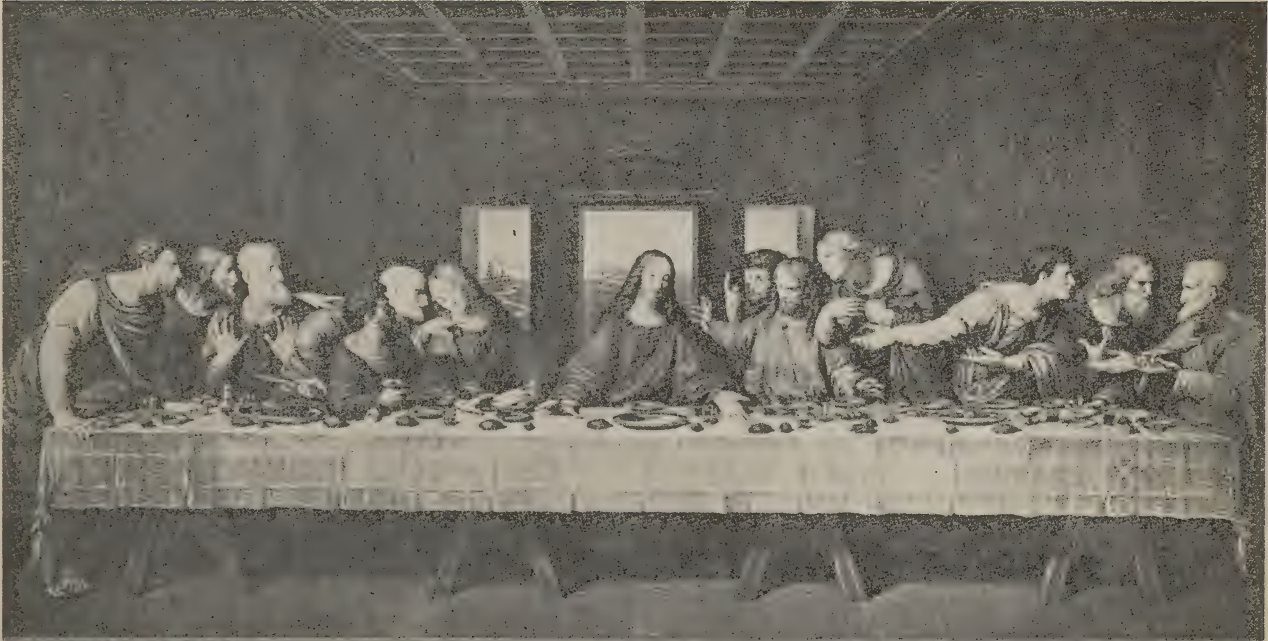
1. Where did Jesus tell Peter and John to go in order to find a room in which to arrange the Paschal Supper?
2. Whose home was it?

B.–The preparation.

1. What did Peter and John have to do in order to prepare the lamb, ready for supper?
2. Who likely made the room ready?
3. What was the customary posture at the table?
4. What things were needed for the Supper?

C.–A general question.

1. What was the purpose and the significance of the Paschal Feast?



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BOSTON EDITION.

THE LAST SUPPER.

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PROBLEM 56

THE LAST SUPPER

PROBLEM: Of what significance is this Paschal Feast of Christ's?

Bible References: Matt. 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:7-38; John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Three class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–His desire to eat the Passover.

1. "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15-16)

Comment:

This, so far as we know, is the only sacrifice ever offered by Christ. It is symbolical of the offering of His own life as a sacrifice for mankind.

2. Christ to give His life.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18)

Comment:

The foreshadowing of this event He particularly emphasized at Capernaum just after the feeding of the five thousand:

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven:

If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51)

B.–The Last Supper.

1. "Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." (Matt. 26:20)

Comment:

In the light of the strongest evidence it seems to us that the supper was held on Thursday evening, which, according to the Jewish day, was really Friday, since their day began after the first three stars appeared in the evening.

The King James translation of the Bible uses the expression "he sat down with the twelve." In his new translation, James Moffat gives the phrase in this manner: "He took his place, with the apostles beside him." This agrees better with what, no doubt, was the prevailing custom. "We know, that, as the Jewish Law directed, they reclined on pillows around a low table, each resting on his left hand, so as to leave the right free." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 492)

The events which happened seem to point to the fact that John reclined on one side of Jesus and Judas on the other.

2. The Jewish procedure at the supper. "The probable order of the Passover feast was as follows:
   - a. Blessing of first cup of wine.
   - b. Handwashing and prayer.
   - c. Bitter herbs, dipped in the haroseth (mixture of fruit and vinegar), passed and eaten.
   - d. Second cup of wine, with question of son and answer of father. (Exodus 12:26-27)
   - e. First part of the Hallel. (Psalms 113-114)
   - f. 'Sop' (a bit of the paschal lamb and bitter herb in bread) dipped in vinegar and eaten.
   - g. Paschal lamb eaten.
   - h. Eating of a piece of unleavened bread (possibly not eaten in time of Christ).

Jn. 13-14-16-15-17
chapters

i. Third cup of wine with grace ('cup of blessing').
j. Fourth cup.
k. Blessing in song. (Psalms 115-118)."
(Burton and Mathews, p. 247)

3. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22:17-18)

Comment:

The Jewish custom prescribed two prayers to be said when the first cup of wine was passed, one of thanksgiving for the crops of the vine, and one for the day. Over the cup of wine they said: "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, who has created the fruit of the vine!" The benediction over the day was longer and contained expressions of "Israel's national pride and self-righteousness." It may have been that Christ actually gave the prayer of thanksgiving of the vine, but certainly He would not have given the prayer for "the day".

4. Christ washed the Apostles' feet.

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
"After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.
"Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

"Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.
"Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

"Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

"For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean." (John 13:4-11)

Comment:

You will note in the outline of the Jewish procedure at the Paschal Feast that after the benediction on the first cup of wine, the traditional hand-washing ceremony occurred. It is evident from the above account in John, however, that instead of the head of the company washing his hands, Jesus substituted the washing of the feet of all the Apostles. It was a humble service, the more symbolical as Jesus laid off His outer garment, girded Himself with a towel, the common mark of a slave, and performed this lowly service.

"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." (John 13:12-16)

Comment:

It was an established custom among the Jews that at the Paschal Feast those who were greatest took the chief places at the table. This question of who should be greatest among the Apostles had repeatedly come up for dispute, and no doubt had been aroused again when the Apostles began to take their places around the table; for is it not likely that they sought the honored places? (See Luke 22:24-28)

Doubtless Jesus observed the situation, and resolved again to teach them the great lesson of life. It is not the chiefest seat which determines who is greatest, but who serves most and who loves most—these are the qualities of honor.

5. He discloses the fact that one of them will betray him.
   - a. "And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." (Matt. 26:21)

Comment:

Christ had attempted often to get his Apostles to understand that He would be killed, a fact which they could not bring themselves to realize. The shock must have been tremendous when He told them that even one of them would be the betrayer.

   - b. "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matt. 26:22) St. John (13:22) says: "Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake."
   - c. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?" (John 13:23-25)
   - d. Christ's answer.
     "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. (John 13:26)

Comment:

It is quite likely that during the supper Christ had observed the third essential, that of passing the bitter herbs which had been dipped in a mixture of fruit, salt and vinegar, signifying Israel's bitter experience during their bondage and during the years of wandering in the wilderness. It may be that the "sop" came a little later, as was the custom. "But we have direct testimony, that, about the time of Christ, 'the sop' which was handed round consisted of these things wrapped together: flesh of the Paschal Lamb, a piece of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. This, we believe, was 'the sop,' which Jesus, having dipped it for him in the dish, handed first to Judas, as occupying the first and chief place at the Table." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 506)

e. "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him." (John 13:27-28)

Comment:

Evidently His answer to John had not been heard by all. Neither had His statement to Judas been understood.

f. "He then, having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night." (John 13:30)

6. Love one another.

"Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:31, 33-35)

Comment:

He had traveled with them, labored with them, slept with them, and suffered with them. He had grown to love them and their companionship. He knew how much they needed Him, and how hard it would be for them to bear the burdens which were to follow. How necessary would it be for them to dispel all contention among themselves and unite in love one for another. Without the observance of this new commandment, they would be torn asunder both from within and from without, and the Gospel would be in danger of failure in its purpose.

7. Jesus introduces the Sacrament.
   "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.
   "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:
   "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
   "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:26-29)

Comment:

According to Jewish custom, after the meal a third cup was filled and a special blessing pronounced over it. It is likely that it was at this time that Jesus changed the traditional Jewish custom into His new institution, the Sacrament, symbolizing His own great Sacrifice as a ransom for the sins of the world.

8. "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." (Matt. 26:30)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–His desire to eat the Passover.

1. What did Christ say about His desire to eat this Passover?
2. Did Jesus generally offer sacrifice?
3. What did He say about His power over life?
4. In what way did He refer to the Last Supper in His speech on the Bread of Life?

B.–The Last Supper.

1. Did they sit at the table or recline? Why?

2. What was the customary procedure of carrying through the supper?
3. What did Christ say after giving thanks over the first cup of wine?
4. Instead of following the custom of handwashing, what did Jesus do?
5. Why did Peter object? Why did he later proffer his head and hands?
6. Why did Jesus wash their feet?
7. What is it that determines qualities of honor?
8. What disclosure did He make at this time about His betrayer?
9. What was the reaction of the Apostles?
10. What was John's question?
11. What was Christ's reply?
12. To whom did He give the "sop"?
13. How did Judas react?
14. After Judas left, what new commandment did Jesus give them?
15. What new institution did Jesus now introduce?
16. What did He say?
17. What were the significant things that Jesus did during the Last Supper? What was the most significant of all?

PROBLEM 57

THE PARTING WORDS

After the Last Supper was ended, Master and disciples clung together. Christ had no property to divide among them. He could not write a will. But He had something far more precious. In this sacred hour He would recall to them His words of life. They, like sons around the death-bed of their father, would cherish every parting word.

PROBLEM: Following the institution of the Last Supper, what were Christ's parting instructions?

Bible References: John, chapters 14, 15, 16, 17.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Christ's parting instructions to His disciples.

1. The vine.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:1, 4-6)

2. Friends.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:14-15, 13)

3. Persecution.

   "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended (repelled).

   "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

   "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." (John 16:1-3)

Comment:

This condition came all too soon. For it was not many months after the Crucifixion that the Apostles and the disciples were hounded from city to city, and scattered far and wide. Even Saul, who was later known as St. Paul, actually received permission to persecute the disciples and drag them into prison. Doubtless he believed he was doing God's service.

4. The Holy Spirit or Comforter to come.

   "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

   "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John 16:7, 13)

5. Ask in His name.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you." (John 16:23-24, 26)

6. He came from the Father.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

"His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

"Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?" (John 16:28-31)

Comment:

James Moffat translates this last phrase a little plainer. "You believe it at last?" If He could have made sure that they believed and understood, it would, indeed, have been comforting to Him. For He alone realized how weak they were. Persecutions awaited them. Knowing how very badly they needed Him, He sorrowed for them and He tried to the last to prepare them for the trials to come.

7. He went to prepare a place.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." (John 14:1-2, 4)

Comment:

It seems from the records that just previously He had told them where he was going, but evidently it was not plain, for Thomas said: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Christ answered: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:5, 6)

8. "Shew us the Father."
"Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:8-9)
9. Simon to deny Him.
"Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.
"Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.
"Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." (John 13:36-38)
10. He left His peace with them.
"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)
11. His prayer of dedication and consecration.
After Jesus had given the above instructions and many others which we cannot now mention, He

> "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."
>
> "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.
>
> "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:1, 4-5) (Read the whole prayer in John 17.)

B.–General comment.

Thus, far into the night the group remained together. They would hear His parting words, and live the closing hours under the inspiration of their great Master. He, on the other hand, with tender love recalled to them teachings and instructions which would best conserve their faith and bring comfort and encouragement to tide them over the way of life.

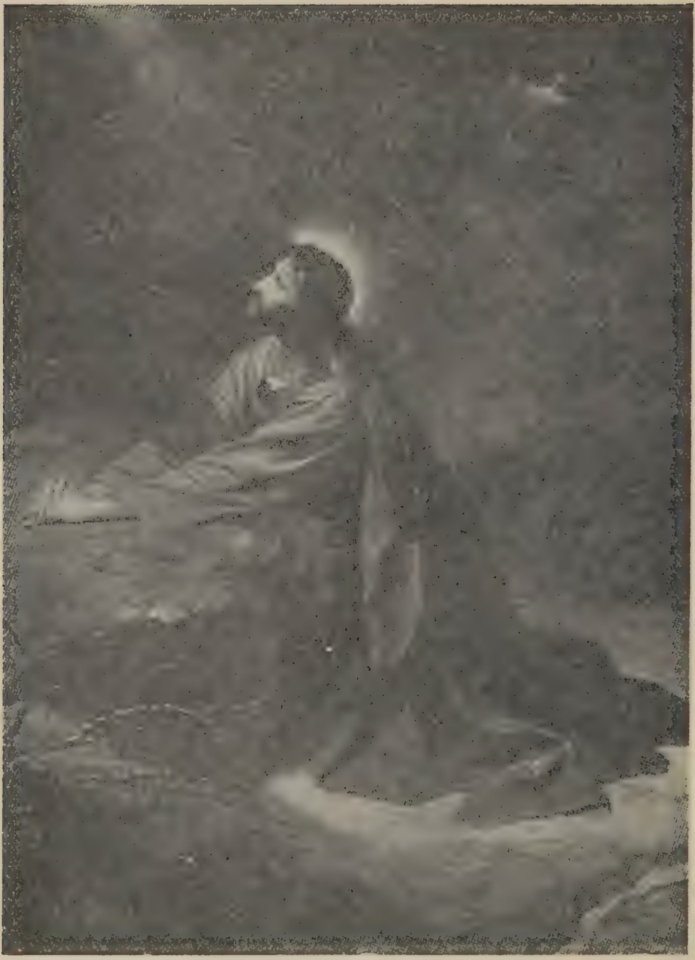
> "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." (John 18:1)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Christ's parting instructions.

1. What relation should continue to exist between Him and them?
2. Why did He call them friends?
3. What was the relation of His going to the coming of the Comforter?
4. What change in prayer did He make?
5. When He said that He came from the Father and would return to Him, what was their reaction? What was His reply?
6. What did He tell them about His preparing a place for them?

7. What reply did He make to Philip when the latter said, "Shew us the Father"?
8. What prophecy did He make about Peter?
9. What was His last statement to them?
10. What are the important things contained in His great prayer which closed the supper?
11. Where did they go when He left the room?
12. Make a general summary of His parting instructions.



CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE

PROBLEM 58

GETHSEMANE—THE VICTORY

PROBLEM: What is the meaning of Christ's great agony in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Bible References: Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–In Gethsemane.

1. "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.
   "And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.
   "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." (Matt. 26:36-38)

Comment:

After leaving the room where the Last Supper was held, Christ led His Apostles eastward toward the Mount of Olives. They crossed the little brook Kidron, which ran between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, and soon entered what has been called for centuries the Garden of Gethsemane. We must not think of this as a flower garden, or as a vegetable garden. Gethsemane means "oil-vat" or "oil-press." So at this place was located an important oil-press. This, no doubt, was a somewhat secluded part. It is quite likely that Jesus and His disciples, who had often slept out of doors, had been here on some previous visits to Jerusalem, and that Judas knew they would likely sleep there that night.

2. Jesus prayed alone.

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39) St. Mark adds this statement (14:36): "And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

Comment:

We do not know how long Jesus prayed. But when He had finished He returned to Peter, James, and John. Like little children, too inexperienced to sense anxiety or danger, they had fallen asleep. The day had been long and the duties arduous. Rest for the body made greater claims upon them than any trouble of soul. But strenuous as the day had been, there was no sleep for Jesus. He was in the midst of battle, the supreme conflict of His life. He aroused them long enough to chide them gently for their unkindness, saying:

"What! could ye not watch with me one hour?

"Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:40-41)

3. The second prayer.

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matt. 26:42)

Comment:

Jesus evidently was passing through great agony of soul. Do you think that He was so afraid of death, that He shrank from it with greater fear than we do? A little later we shall read how Stephen faced death bravely for the cause of Christ. Christians down through the ages have given their lives in the fight for truth. We cannot think that Jesus was less brave. Jesus loved life, and like all of us desired to live. Do you think He was in great agony because He wanted to continue to enjoy life? Women and men, too, with all their human weaknesses and love for life, have with less apparent agony accepted death rather than fail in duty. Would Jesus be less heroic?

Is there a possible explanation, then, of His great agony of soul, an agony so great that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground?" (Luke 22:44) We have suggested previously in our study what we feel is the explanation. His agony in Gethsemane is directly connected with what happened at His baptism and during His great temptation. We remember that when He was baptized, the Father in a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Further, the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. During His forty days' fast, He struggled to understand what such a message would involve. The consciousness of His Kingship and power as the Son of God burst upon Him. His duties involved the office of the Christ, the Savior of mankind.

How the struggle was made we studied in the problem on His temptation. What great decision did He make at that time? He had consistently followed that decision. Now in Gethsemane the old temptation of the method by which the work of the Christ should be accomplished came up for the last bitter struggle. The battle was between Kingship and power against a previous decision which involved the evident sanction and will of the Father. The burden of His prayer seems to have been that there still might be another way to accomplish His task. He had the power to call down legions of angels to help Him. Should He at last become a Messiah of battle, resorting to force of arms?

There is no temptation for a weak nation to attack a strong one. On the other hand, if a nation is powerful in force of arms, there is a temptation to use them if its ships are seized, its citizens murdered, and its dignity insulted. It seems to us, therefore, that in Christ's weakest moment there might have occurred to Him the thought that possibly there was another way. Should He permit Himself to be insulted, scourged, and crucified by a mob of fanatical men? Would the Father permit such suffering on the part of His Son?

Thus His soul struggled at Gethsemane. But oh, what a lesson in obedience! Though His desire was great for

another way, yet His prayer was: If it is not possible, Father, "thy will be done."
He had been struggling alone, for when He returned the second time to the chosen three, they lay fast asleep.

4. His third prayer.
   "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." (Matt. 26:44)
   St. Luke adds (22:43-44) "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
   "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Comment:

The answer had come. The angel had spoken. Christ had answered: "Father, thy will be done." Thus Christ had faced His last great test of obedience. The victory had been won.

5. The end of prayer.
   "And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." (Mark 14:41)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–In Gethsemane.

1. Where was the Garden of Gethsemane located?
2. Whom did He take with Him further into the Garden? What request did He make of them?
3. What did Christ pray for?
4. When Jesus returned what were the three Apostles doing?
5. What was Christ's second prayer?
6. Account for Christ's agony at Gethsemane.
7. What was His real battle?

8. What was the significant characteristic of Christ's prayer?
9. Were His desires granted?
10. While praying the third time, what happened?
11. After that, what statement did He make to the three Apostles?
12. Why was Christ's agony in Gethsemane greater than it has been for other men who have faced death?
13. Should prayers always be answered affirmatively? Why?
14. If not, should we lose faith and cease to pray?
15. In what way is prayer valuable in life?

Problem 59

THE BETRAYAL

Problem: How was Jesus betrayed?

Bible References: Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-54; John 18:1-11.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The betrayal.

1. After returning from prayer the third time, Jesus said:

"Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people." (Matt. 26:46-47)

Comment:

During the Passover Feast, the Temple was always guarded by from 400 to 600 soldiers, who were there ready to quell any riot that might arise. The Pharisees were careful not to usurp any rights of armed force. It was natural, therefore, that when the Sanhedrin sent Jews to take Jesus, that they would apply for armed soldiers to go along in order to effect the arrest without a tumult. St. John (18:3) adds to the picture when he writes:

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons."

2. The sign to the mob.

"Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

"And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him." (Matt. 26:48-49) If at this time there remained in Judas a heart, a conscience, it must have been pierced to the center as Jesus replied: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48)

3. Jesus meets the mob.

   Advancing toward the mob, Jesus said: "Whom seek ye?" They replied: "Jesus of Nazareth." Then Jesus said: "I am he." (John 18:4, 5) For an instant, as though taken by surprise, they shrank back.

   "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

   "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." (John 18:7-8)

4. Jesus is taken.

   "And they laid their hands on him, and took him." (Mark 14:46)

Comment:

It was likely at this time that the ire of Peter was aroused. He reached for his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. "The servant's name was Malchus." (John 18:10) Christ ordered Peter to put away his sword, and then He healed the servant.

5. Jesus registers a just complaint.

   "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?

   "I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled." (Mark 14:48-49)

6. His disciples flee.

   "And they all forsook him, and fled." (Mark 14:50)

7. Christ is bound and led away.
   "Then the band and the captain and officers ot the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,
   "And led him away to Annas first." (John 18:12-13)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The Betrayal.

1. Who came with Judas to take Christ?
2. Why did Roman soldiers come?
3. What was to be the sign of the betrayal?
4. When Judas kissed Christ, what was Christ's reply?
5. What action of Christ's would lead you to believe that He was not fearful?
6. Can you explain this lack of fear when a few moments before He was in great agony?
7. What was His request concerning the Apostles?
8. How did Peter respond when the guards and servants of the high priests stepped up to take Jesus?
9. What protest did Jesus make?
10. Why had they not taken Him while He taught in the Temple?
11. To whom did they take Him first?
12. Account for Judas' betrayal. Was he angry with Christ?
13. What causes friends to renounce companionship?
14. List some of the ways that the spirit of Judas affects people today. Results.

PROBLEM 60

CHRIST'S TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWS

PROBLEM: What do you think of the Jewish trial of Christ? Did justice prevail in His treatment? Why?

Bible References: Matt. 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72; Luke 22:54-71; John 18:12-27.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Three class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The arrest of Jesus was illegal.

1. "Now the Jewish law prohibited all proceedings by night." (Dupin)
2. The Mosaic code and the Rabbinic rule based thereon forbade a man's life to be endangered through the agency of a traitor.

Comment:

The arrest was effected on the 14th of Nisan. According to our calendar, as near as we can determine, that would be April 6th, 30 A. D. It was night before Jesus left the Last Supper. He had been in Gethsemane for a considerable time. Therefore, it must have been near midnight when the betrayal and illegal arrest were effected.

B.–Jesus before Annas.

1. "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year." (John 18:12-13)

Comment:

The home of Annas was located on the eastern slope of the hills in the western part of the city. He was one of the best known persons of his time. He had been high priest himself for five or six years, from 7 to 14 A. D.

After he was deposed by the Romans, five of his sons in turn held the office, and at the time of Christ his son-in-law Caiaphas was high priest. Thus it was that Annas virtually controlled the office for many years. Furthermore, being a man of ability and much wealth, his influence and power were very great. We might liken him to a great political "boss" who sat in the background and directed affairs. The men who held office became figureheads.

You will remember that the "Booths of the Sons of Annas" filled the Temple courts with their nefarious profiteering traffic. Four days before the arrest, Jesus had driven these money-changers out of the Temple. It is not surprising, therefore, that Annas would have the man who challenged his power brought before him now. We do not know what happened at the home of Annas.

2. Was it lawful to present Jesus before Annas?
    a. It was illegal because done at night.
    b. "Be not a sole judge, for there is no sole judge but One." (Mishna, Pirke Aboth IV. 8) Thus the law specifically prohibited the procedure before Annas.
    c. Again, private preliminary examination was prohibited.

Comment:

The above rules were laid down, so that an accused person might have the privilege of a public hearing. This was fundamental in Jewish law.

C.–Jesus before Caiaphas, the high priest.

1. "Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." (John 18:24)
   "The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine." (John 18:19)
2. Was this procedure lawful?
    a. This seems to have been a private examination also, hence prohibited.
    b. The high priest proceeded illegally when he asked Jesus about his doctrines, for his an-

swer would likely incriminate him. "We have it as a fundamental principle of our jurisprudence that no one can bring an accusation against himself. Should a man make a confession of guilt before a legally constituted tribunal, such confession is not to be used against him, unless properly attested by two other witnesses." (Maimonides, Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 2)

3. Christ's answer to Caiaphas was really an appeal to the above law.

"Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

"Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said." (John 18:20-21)

Comment:

"In this reply Jesus planted Himself squarely upon His legal rights as a Jewish citizen. It was in every word the voice of pure Hebrew justice, founded upon the broad principle of their judicial procedure and recalling an unjust judge to the first duty of his great office." (Chandler, p. 246)

4. Christ was struck by an officer.

"And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?" (John 18:22)

Comment:

There was a well-established law that the accused person should, during any examination and trial, be protected against insults and bodily harm. Christ made a just plea for the enforcement of this law when He replied:

"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:23)

5. Caiaphas recognized Christ's appeal for witnesses.

"And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.
"For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." (Mark 14:55-56)

Comment:

"The following persons were not allowed to be witnesses: Gentiles, women, minors, slaves, idiots and lunatics, deaf mutes, blind men, gamblers, usurers, illiterate or immodest persons, individuals who had been convicted of immorality . . . . and all persons directly interested in the case." (Chandler, p. 127)

By specific rule of the Talmud, "If one witness contradict another, the testimony is not accepted." (Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 2) In this respect the testimony of each witness must cover the whole case. The testimonies of at least two witnesses must agree in all essentials. The accusations had to be given separately and "always in the presence of the accused." By law the witnesses automatically became the executioners as well. In order to insure the accused against injustice, two very strong rules were effective. In a capital punishment case, if the witness proved false, such person was to receive the sentence which might have been given to the accused, if he had been found guilty. We can imagine that ordinarily this would secure great care in speaking the truth as a witness. Add to this the Mosaic Law, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," and there was good safeguard against perjury.

But even this was not always sufficient, so there grew up the custom of examining witnesses before they were allowed to testify in order to find out if at least two could be found who agreed in all essentials. It was in compliance with this custom that Caiaphas examined the witnesses who came. "For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." Therefore their testimony was rejected.

6. Witnesses found.

"At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

"And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" (Matt. 26:60-62)

Comment:

It is interesting to look back and see what Christ had said. It was during a time of Phariseean opposition and in reply, according to John, to their desire for a sign. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . . But he spake of the temple of his body." (John 2:19, 21) These witnesses evidently were not only misquoting Him, but were actually attempting His destruction, which would result in His resurrection on the third day.

"But neither so did their witness agree together." (Mark 14:59) Caiaphas was, therefore, forced to dismiss all witnesses and proceed in another way.

7. Christ asked to testify against Himself.

a. "And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." (Matt. 26:63)

Comment:

Every Israelite claimed the right to call himself the son of God. But Caiaphas shrewdly asked if He were Christ, the Son of God. Previously Christ had protested against being asked to testify against Himself.

b. Jesus answered.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26:64)

Comment:

Had He received justice, He would not have been subjected to this indignity. In the absence of witnesses, according to the Talmud, His confession should not have been used against Him. Caiaphas, however, proceeded on the basis of His answer, and thus made of no effect a fundamental law of justice. Jesus was condemned upon His uncorroborated confession, in violation to Hebrew law. (See Chandler, p. 272)

8. The accusation against Jesus.

"Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.
"What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." (Matt. 26:65-66)

Comment:

Edersheim tells us that "the Sanhedrin did not and could not legally originate charges," because its members were judges, neither could any individual member do so. Caiaphas therefore "deliberately assumed the role of accuser in violation of the law"; for only leading witnesses could accuse. Caiaphas could not be a witness, for he was a judge. His indictment against Jesus was illegal, therefore.

Again, they all voted to condemn. This, according to Jewish law, should have acquitted Him. "A very peculiar rule of Hebrew law provided that 'a simultaneous and unanimous verdict of guilt rendered on the day of trial, had the effect of an acquittal.' Such a verdict was considered to be lacking in the element of mercy, and was thought to result more from conspiracy and mob violence than from mature judicial deliberation." (Chandler, p. 279) To condemn Jesus, therefore, by unanimous vote was illegal.

D.–Christ was subjected to revolting insults.

1. "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou

Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matt. 26:67-68)

Comment:

The Sanhedrinists with the high priest had evidently left the room for a time. If so, the taunts and insults were being heaped upon Him by the guards and servants of the high priest. Thus, the Son of God in majestic voluntary submission permitted without complaint such injustice and insult. How true it was that no man was taking His life, but that He was humbly giving it for mankind.

E.–A second meeting.

1. "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." (Matt. 27:1)

Comment:

It seems clear that the question of Christ's guilt was not the consideration of this meeting, but as Edersheim suggests, the purpose was evidently to determine how best to carry out the informal sentence which was given during the night at the home of Caiaphas.

F.–A statement of other violations of law.

1. The entire criminal procedure of the Mosaic code rests upon four rules:
   a. Certainty of the indictment.
   b. Publicity in the discussion.
   c. Assurance against danger.
   d. Freedom granted to the accused.
   All these were violated.
2. "Let a capital offence be tried during the day, but suspend it at night." (Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 1)
3. The proceedings were illegal because they occurred before the morning sacrifice.
4. "Court must not be held on the Sabbath, or any holy day." "They shall not judge on the

eve of the Sabbath, nor that of any festival." (Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 1) Yet this session had been held on a holy day and on the day before the Sabbath. Therefore it was illegal.

5. The trial was illegal because it was concluded in one day.
   "A criminal case resulting in the acquittal of the accused may terminate the same day on which the trial began. But if a sentence of death is to be pronounced, it can not be concluded before the following day." (Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 1)
6. "The members of the Sanhedrin were legally disqualified to try Jesus." (Chandler, p. 295) "Nor must there be on the judicial bench either a relation, or a particular friend, or an enemy of either the accused or of the accuser." (Mendelsohn, "Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews," p. 108)

Comment:

It is clear from the above mass of irregularities, that these Sanhedrinists perpetrated what Edersheim calls the "greatest judicial murder" of all time. It can hardly be realized that men in the name of their church and religion could scheme, with deliberate intent, to effect the death of a co-religionist, especially that of Christ, the Son of God.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The arrest.

1. What was the Jewish law about arrests at night?
2. What about endangering the life of an individual by a traitor?

B.–Before Annas.

1. Who was Annas? How was it that he held great power and influence?
2. Why was Christ taken to him first?

3. Why was it illegal to have taken Jesus before Annas?

C.–Before Caiaphas.

1. Why was it illegal for Caiaphas to ask Christ to testify against Himself?
2. Why did Jesus protest his question?
3. What happened to Jesus because of this protest?
4. Why was it illegal for the officer to strike Jesus?
5. What individuals were barred from being witnesses in any criminal case?
6. What were the safeguards against false witnesses?
7. What accusations did the false witnesses make?
8. What was Christ's reply?
9. What had He really said?
10. Did Caiaphas proceed to try Christ upon their testimony?
11. What did the high priest now command Christ to do?
12. What was Christ's answer?
13. Why was this procedure against him illegal?
14. What was their final accusation?
15. What was illegal about their procedure?
16. According to their law what should have been their disposition of the case when all voted to condemn?

D.–Insults.

1. In what ways did they subject Christ to prosecution?
2. Was this legal? Why?

E.–The second meeting.

1. What was its purpose?

F.–Other violations.

1. Name the four fundamental principles of the Mosaic Law.
2. In capital cases what was specifically stated regarding the duration of the trial?

3. Why were the Sanhedrinists disqualified to try the case?
4. Make a list of all the ways in which the Jewish trial of Christ was illegal?
5. What is your conclusion about the problem of our lesson? Did justice prevail?

PROBLEM 61

JESUS IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY

The Pharisees and Sanhedrinists had proceeded on the assumption that Jesus was merely a Jew among Jews. As such, according to the Mosaic Law, He had blasphemed. (See Deut. 13:1-5) If, however, He was the Christ, then His claims were proper and He was innocent.

In our day justice is better provided for than it was in the Mosaic and Talmudic codes. Now a case is never complete and freedom of the accused is not properly provided for, unless he be properly represented in defense. This, however, was not the case in Jewish law. The witnesses were both prosecutors and executioners. "The judges shall weigh the matter in the sincerity of their conscience." (Mishna, Sanhedrin IV. 5) The defense council was missing. On the other hand, the judges were to weigh matters in sincerity, which we should think, if fairly done, would involve the defensive side of the case. We will follow a masterful argument.

PROBLEM: To substantiate the defense that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and therefore not a blasphemer, what evidence might have been brought forth?

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Affirmative evidence.

1. The Jewish expectancy of a Messiah.
In Problem 3 of this book we discussed briefly this conception. Suffice it to say here, that there was a common belief that a Messiah would come. At the time of Christ there was considerable excitement over the signs of the times, and many believed that the Messiah would soon come.

Comment:

It was not illegal for Christ to claim Messiahship. "Such claim merely raised an issue as to its truth or falsity which was to be investigated like any other proposition of theology or law." (Chandler, p. 318) Caiaphas in fairness should have proceeded with such investigation, but fanaticism hindered. He decided the matter on mere assumption that what the Sanhedrinists believed was the truth.

2. Two important signs.

Around his death-bed Jacob called his twelve sons and uttered a prophecy which ancient Rabbinical commentators were unanimously of the opinion referred to the Messiah.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10)

"And for ages the people had been told to watch for two special signs which would herald the coming of the great Deliverer: (1) the departure of the sceptre from Judah; (2) the loss of the judicial power." (Chandler, p. 322)

This warning to watch for those signs comes from the Talmud: "The son of David shall not come unless the royal power has been taken from Judah." Furthermore: "The son of David shall not come unless the judges have ceased in Israel." ("Sanhedrin," fol. 97) "Both of these signs had appeared at the time of the Roman conquest, shortly before the birth of Christ." (Chandler, p. 322) A Roman Procurator became governor, and sovereignty for the Jews was lost forever.

B.–Evidence from prophecy that Jesus was the Messiah.

1. The Messiah to be born in Bethlehem.

a. The prophecy.

"But thou, Beth-le-hem Ephratah, though

thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2)

b. Fulfilment.

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,)"

"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

"And the angel said unto them (the shepherds), Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:4, 7, 10-11)

Comment:

It is to be emphasized here that in contrast to the assumption of Caiaphas, an angel of the Lord declared that this babe was Christ the Lord.

2. The Messiah to come through the lineage of David.

a. The prophecy.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." (Jer. 23:5-6)

b. Fulfilment.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1:32)

3. A forerunner to prepare the way.
   a. The prophecy.
   "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3)
   b. Fulfilment.
   In speaking of John the Baptist Jesus said: "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
   "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (Luke 7:27-28)
   When the Pharisees sent priests and Levites to ask John "Who art thou?" he replied: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." (John 1:23)
4. The method of the Messiah's work.
   a. The prophecy.
   "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1)
   b. Fulfilment.
   Christ read this passage in the Synagogue at Nazareth. Then He said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (See Luke 4:17-21)
5. Miracles of healing.
   a. The prophecy.
   "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." (Isaiah 35:5-6)

b. Fulfilment.

When John the Baptist was in prison and sent his disciples to inquire "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus replied: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. 11:3-5)

6. Entrance into Jerusalem.
   a. The prophecy.

      "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zech. 9:9)

   b. Fulfilment.

      "And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon, as it is written,
      "Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt." (John 12:14-15)

7. Betrayal for thirty pieces of silver.
   a. The prophecy.

      "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.
      "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." (Zech. 11:12-13)

b. Fulfilment.

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

"And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." (Matt. 26:14-15)

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

"Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

"And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

"And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

"And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

"Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day." (Matt. 27:3-8)

II.–Organization of Material.

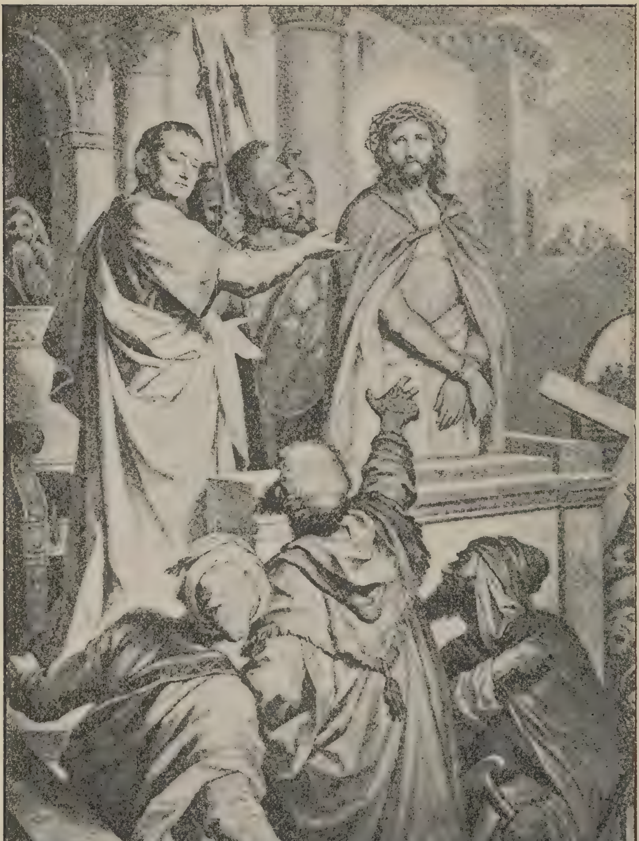
A.–Affirmative evidence that Jesus is the Christ.

1. What was the Messianic hope of the Jews?
2. If Caiaphas had desired to give justice, what should he have done?
3. The Jews were taught that two particular signs would precede the coming of their Messiah. What were they?
4. What evidence have we that these signs had appeared?

B.–Evidence from prophecy.

1. Christ's birth at Bethlehem fulfilled what prophecy?

2. The expected Messiah was to be a descendant of David. Show that Jesus was.
3. Show that John the Baptist's coming fulfilled prophecy.
4. How did Christ's method of work fulfill prophecy?
5. What were some of the prophecies concerning Christ's power to heal and do miracles?
6. In what way had the prophets foretold His triumphal entry into Jerusalem?
7. What was Zechariah's prophecy concerning the price of His betrayal?
8. List other prophecies and their fulfilment.
9. What is your conclusion concerning the affirmative Old Testament evidence that Jesus was the expected Messiah?



CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

PROBLEM 62

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

PROBLEM: Did Jesus obtain justice in Pilate's court?

Bible References: Matt. 27:2, 11-31; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-40; 19:1-16.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Three class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The accusation.

1. "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor." (Matt. 27:1-2)

Comment:

During the illegal night trial of Jesus before the prejudiced Sanhedrinists at the home of Caiaphas, Christ had finally been falsely condemned to death. But they knew that they could not carry out the sentence, unless Pilate gave his consent; for at this time the Roman government reserved the authority to itself of power over life and death. It was for this reason that the whole council met early Friday morning to formulate some accusation which a Roman governor would recognize.

2. The question of defilement arose again. "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (John 18:28)

Comment:

Much difference of opinion has prevailed about the above statement. Edersheim maintains, with sound argument, that the statement did not refer to the Paschal Sacrifice and supper. On the other hand, the first day of the feast another important sacrifice (Chagigah) was offered. There was a rule that if a person had become Levitically defiled, he could not offer the Chagigah; and furthermore, no one could substitute and offer the sacrifice for a person who had become ceremonially defiled. Thus it was that these priests would not enter the Pretorium. By chance a piece of leavened bread might have been in the room. If so, it would have defiled a Jew till the ceremonial bath. Again, if through accident or riot or otherwise, a person had been killed during the night and his body had been taken into the hall, it would have defiled a Jew to enter. Thus, with great religious scruples these pious leaders observed traditionalism, but forgot indeed the weightier matters of mercy, justice, and love. Truly they were "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel." Externalism was enthroned. The letter of the law was supreme. The spirit thereof was dead.

3. Pilate asked for their accusation.
   a. "Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?" (John 18:29)

Comment:

The trial before Pilate did not correspond to Roman trials in every particular. However, one of the essential elements of a Roman trial was that there should be a definite accusation presented. In asking for such, Pilate evidently proceeded as a Roman judge, and expected to give the matter a fair hearing.

"It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him." (Acts 25:16)

   b. Their answer.

   "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." (John 18:30)

Comment:

They really meant by this that they had tried Jesus, and had condemned Him as a criminal. They desired now that Pilate should, without further consideration, waive his right and duty as a Roman Procurator to re-try the case and accept their decision. In presenting such an idea these Sanhedrinists virtually admitted that they had given Jesus a trial; for Jewish law provided as much for an accused person. But we have learned with what lack of justice they shamefully proceeded throughout the night to violate every form of Mosaic law.

c. Pilate's answer.

"Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." (John 18:31)

Comment:

The Jewish law, as we learned in a previous problem, prohibited trials by night and on festival days. Pilate could not have been ignorant of this. In the light of this law, Pilate could not have even surmised that these Sanhedrinists had violated all custom and had actually held the trial. So, not informed of the violation, he bade them go judge according to their law.

d. Their reply.

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." (John 18:31)

Comment:

This is a clear recognition that Roman authority held the power over life and death, and that the sceptre had fallen from the hand of Judah.

We can imagine the scene in the street as these fanatical Pharisees huddled together to determine on some new plan which would call for Pilate's attention to the case.

4. Their accusation.

"We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." (Luke 23:2)

Comment:

One of the most grievous sins known to Judaism was blasphemy. Of course, blasphemy meant nothing to Pilate. It had nothing to do with Roman law. These Sanhedrinists knew this, so they did not even present the accusation upon which they had condemned Jesus, but instead substituted the greatest crime known to Rome, that of treason.

The accusation is really three in one. That Jesus was perverting the nation was indefinite. That they found him forbidding to give tribute to Caesar was a serious accusation, but untrue. You will remember that on Tuesday, three days previous, they had sent Pharisees to intrigue Jesus by asking if it were lawful to pay tribute. You know how well Jesus answered: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." That Jesus claimed to be a king was the gravest of the charges. It was Pilate's duty to investigate such a charge.

B.–Pilate's examination of Jesus and his decision.

1. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33)
2. Christ made sure of his ground.
   "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" (John 18:34)

Comment:

Before Christ could answer He must know just what motive prompted Pilate's question. Was Pilate presenting the question merely from the Jewish or Sanhedrinists' point of view, or had he presented it from a Roman viewpoint, with the idea of determining if Christ really claimed temporal kingship? This, of course, would have been treason.

3. Pilate answered.
   "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" (John 18:35)

Comment:

We infer from Christ's reply that He understood that Pilate had asked the question from a Roman standpoint.

4. Christ answered.
   "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36)
5. Pilate wanted to make sure if Jesus even claimed to be a king.
   "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?" (John 18:37)
6. Christ's answer.
   "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37)
7. Pilate's decision.
   Pilate wondered concerning just what truth is, after all. "Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." (John 18:38)
   Thus the Roman Procurator acquitted Jesus of the crime of treason.

C.–The persistent fanatics.

1. It seems that when Pilate had ruled against the Jews and had found Jesus not guilty of treason, they were thrown into great confusion and began to present accusation after accusation.
   "And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.
   "But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled." (Mark 15:4-5)

Comment:

It was well established in Roman law that the accused had the right of defense. Pilate was surprised that Jesus did not take advantage of his rights.

2. "And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." (Luke 23:5)

D.–Pilate thereby got a new plan.

1. "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time." (Luke 23:6-7)

Comment:

This was Herod Antipas who had imprisoned and murdered John the Baptist. "The pages of sacred history mention the name of no more shallow and contemptible character than this petty princeling, this dissolute Idumaean Sadducee." (Chandler, Vol. II, p. 120) He is the only man ever addressed by Jesus with a contemptuous epithet. When Jesus was warned, toward the end of His mission, that Herod sought to kill Him, He said: "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." (Luke 13:32)

2. Christ before Herod.
    a. "And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing." (Luke 23:8-9)

Comment:

It is evident that Jesus had only disgust for Herod. It is said that he was the only man with whom Christ refused to speak.

b. Christ humiliated.

"And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

"And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate." (Luke 23:10-11)

E.–Before Pilate again.

1. Christ acquitted a second time.

"And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

"Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

"No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him." (Luke 23:13-15)

Comment:

Thus their second accusation was decided against them, and for the second time Christ was acquitted.

2. Pilate proffered to scourge him.

"I will therefore chastise him, and release him."

"And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

"(Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)" (Luke 23:16, 18-19)

Comment:

Before the Roman law, if a person were found guilty of capital punishment, the preliminary before execution was scourging. But Jesus had been acquitted. A strong ruler would then and there have set him free, and offered protection against the fanatical mob. It is said that he scourged Jesus to appease the mob. If so, it was an act of weakness quickly recognized by the rabble.

3. Pilate warned.
"When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (Matt. 27:19)

4. Pilate attempted again to save Jesus.
When they asked for the release of Barabbas, Pilate asked:
"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.
"And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified." (Matt. 27:22-23)

5. He tried to throw off the responsibility.
"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." (Matt. 27:24)

6. The Jews accepted the responsibility.
"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." (Matt. 27:25)

Comment:

It seems to us now that this was the most awful acceptance of judgment known in history. If these guilty fanatics could have been made to answer for their deeds, justice, perhaps, might have been paid; but to proffer that generations to come should also share in their guilt was awful. However, this people have had to bear from century to century, in all nations, the burden of His blood.

7. Pilate had Jesus scourged.
"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

"And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,
"And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands." (John 19:1-3)

Comment:

These scourgings were awful. Frequently the victims died under the lash. When we realize that Jesus had power at any time to have stopped the humiliating and terrible abuse, we marvel at His calmness. He was slowly drinking the Cup.

8. Another attempt to save Him.
"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.
"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" (John 19:4-5)

Comment:

There the scourged and bleeding Christ stood. Mercy should have called a halt. But the priests only cried more than ever: "Crucify him, crucify him." Then Pilate said: "Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him." (John 19:6)

9. The Jews returned to their blasphemy charge.
"We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." (John 19:7)
10. Pilate's last attempt.
    a. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." (John 19:8-9)
    b. Pilate gave indication of his own power.
    "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou

not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John 19:10)

c. Christ's answer.
"Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." (John 19:11)

d. "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." (John 19:12)

Comment:

What mockery this was! How much love did they have for Caesar? But there was a veiled threat in the challenge. Pilate had had trouble before and had been called to Rome. His position was not too secure. He did not desire more trouble. If the matter went further, he might be reported again.

e. Pilate's last question.
"Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15)

f. Without a country.
"The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15)

Comment:

Well did they say it! For from then until now they have had no king but Caesar. This people have literally been outcasts throughout the centuries—a people without a country.

11. Pilate then gave the sentence.
"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." (John 19:16)

Comment:

Thus ended the second trial. Jesus, the Christ, had been tried before the two greatest tribunals of His day: the great Sanhedrin, and a Roman tribunal. In both justice had failed. Patiently, bravely, heroically, He suffered insult after insult and indignity after indignity. Without murmuring He saw justice for Himself fail. The champion of love and mercy and justice for others would not demand it for Himself.

Whence came this calmness? Whence this power of love and self-control? Could anything testify in stronger terms that it was from above? Truly He was Christ the Lord!

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The accusation.

1. Why did the Sanhedrinists take Jesus to Pilate?
2. What time of day was it?
3. Why did not the Jews go into Pilate's judgment hall? What would have defiled them?
4. According to Roman custom, Pilate asked for an accusation. What was their first reply?
5. What did they want Pilate to do?
6. Give Pilate's answer.
7. What was their reply? Why?
8. Finally they made an accusation. What was it?

B.–Pilate examined Jesus.

1. What was Pilate's first question?
2. Before He answered, what did Christ make sure of?
3. Give Christ's answer.
4. Concerning His kingship, what further question did Pilate ask?
5. What was Christ's reply?
6. Give Pilate's judgment of the case.

C.–The Jews persist.

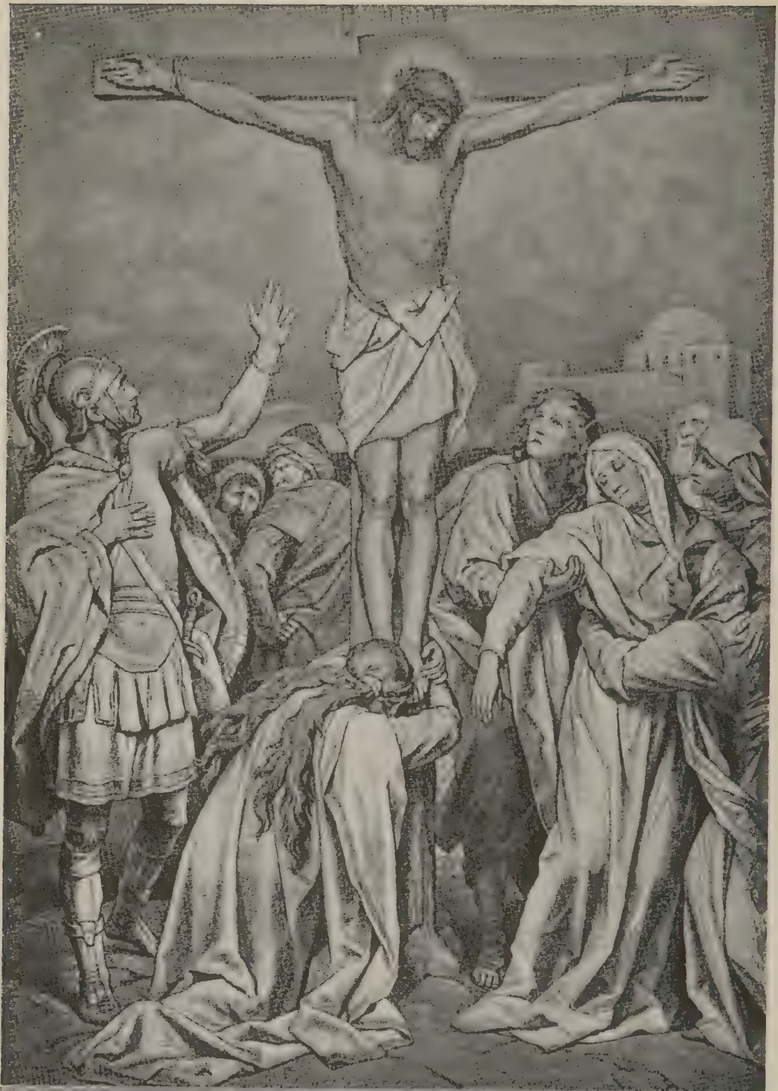
1. When they presented many charges, what did Jesus do? Why was Pilate surprised?
2. Finally what accusation did they propose?

D.–A new plan.

1. When Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean, to whom did he send Him?
2. Who was Herod Antipas? What disposition did he make of the case?

E.–Before Pilate again.

1. With respect to their second charge, what was Pilate's judgment?
2. What illegal thing did Pilate now propose to do? What should he have done?
3. Explain the warning which came to Pilate.
4. When Pilate desired to release Jesus to them, what was their reply?
5. Could Pilate relieve himself of the responsibility by washing his hands of the affair?
6. When the Jews accepted the responsibility, what condemnatory proffer did they make?
7. In what way have they had to bear it?
8. How was He treated by the Roman soldiers?
9. After scourging Jesus, what further attempt did Pilate make to save Him?
10. What was Pilate's threat when Jesus did not answer? What did Jesus then reply?
11. How did the Jews threaten Pilate?
12. When Pilate finally asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" what was the well-known answer?
13. Did Jesus receive justice before the Roman governor?
14. What is your conclusion concerning Jesus, His patience and behavior, during both of these trials? Whence came His power?



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THE CRUCIFIXION.

PROBLEM 63

THE CRUCIFIXION

PROBLEM: In what manner did Christ meet crucifixion? What is admirable about the way He met death?

Bible References: Matt. 27:32-66; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:16-42.

PROBLEMS CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The march to Golgotha.

1. "And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder wast cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will." (Luke 23:25)

Comment:

The Sanhedrinists had led Jesus to Pilate early that Friday morning. What Pilate did was described in detail in the previous problem. Suffice it here to say that the Roman trial had lasted some three hours. So, according to our best information, it was about nine o'clock when Pilate delivered Jesus to the Jews, and they, with guards of Roman soldiers, led Jesus into the street to begin that most melancholy march to Golgotha.

In Gethsemane, all through the night, and during the early morning hours, Jesus had been subjected to most unjust and trying ordeals. The emotional element alone must have weighed heavily upon His strength. The scourging, which sometimes was effected with a whip knotted and made brutal by jagged edges of bones fastened in the knots, was often more than men could bear. Thus, weakened as He was, Jesus was led into the street and made to carry His heavy cross.

2. "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha." (John 19:17)

Comment:

There were three kinds of crosses: St. Andrew's cross (X), a cross in the form of a T, and the Latin cross (+). Our best evidence points to the fact that the cross upon which Christ suffered was the latter or Latin cross.

3. Simon helped bear the cross.

"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross." (Mark 15:21)

Comment:

We mentioned in a previous problem the custom of Roman soldiers of drafting a person to carry their luggage. It was considered a form of tax, and people had to obey. Jesus no doubt referred to it when He said: "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (Matt. 5:41) No doubt it was in compliance with this custom that Simon was asked to carry the cross when Jesus, too weak to do so, fell under its weight.

4. There followed a company of people.

"And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

"But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." (Luke 23:27-28)

Comment:

Thus to the last Christ was ever more thoughtful of others than of Himself. He could bear it, but for them how hard would it be when the days of persecution came!

Ordinarily, says Edersheim, such a procession was headed by the centurian, or by one who proclaimed the nature of the crime. This was the last effort to protect the victim. "Its purpose was to elicit testimony in favor of the criminal when the execution would be immediately arrested." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 583) But in the case of Christ, it is quite likely that this custom was not adhered to, because of the secrecy and haste of the Pharisees.

B.–Secured to the Cross.

1. The arrival at Golgotha.

"And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,
"They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." (Matt. 27:33-34)

Comment:

The best manuscripts agree with Mark 15:23: "And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not."

An association of well-to-do women had been formed in Jerusalem. One of its purposes was to supply to at least Jewish victims a merciful opiate, so that the pangs of the most cruel death known to the world—that of crucifixion—might be deadened. It is said that the two thieves drank deeply, but Jesus refused. He wanted no drug to blunt His pain. He would suffer. The most delicate nerves must function normally.

2. Nailed to the Cross.

It is not known definitely just how Jesus was secured to the Cross. Some say the Cross was laid upon the ground. Then the victim was laid upon the Cross and sharp nails were driven through His hands and feet. After this the Cross was raised and made secure by lowering its base into a hole in the ground. Others maintain that only the cross-piece was laid upon the ground, to which the victim's hands were nailed. Be that as it may, the fact remains that cruel nails pierced Christ's hands and feet through and through. His Cross was raised between those of two thieves.

3. "Forgive them."

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Comment:

We recall vividly what Christ said in His Sermon on the Mount:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:43-44)

These were not the words of an idle theorist. Great as He was when He gave them, that greatness wanes in the light of His own wonderful example cited above, where He prayed for them, who had driven the nails which secured Him to the Cross to suffer for mankind.

4. The inscription.

"And sitting down, they watched him there;

"And set up over his head, his accusation written, *This is Jesus the King of the Jews.*" (Matt. 27:36-37)

Comment:

Probably Pilate directed the writing of this placard. It indicated the reason for the crucifixion of Jesus, and was written in three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. St. John tells us that the chief priests did not like the placard, so they went to Pilate with the request: "Write not, The King of the Jews." But Pilate answered: "What I have written I have written." (John 19:21, 22)

C.–The agony of the Cross.

1. Taunts and insults.

"And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

"And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

"Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

"He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

"He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." (Matt. 27:39-43)

Comment:

Thus, above the taunting jeers not only of the soldiers, but of the conniving priests and Scribes, He hung. Silence was His reply. Whence came this forbearance, as Satanic "ifs" were hurled at Him by priestcraft? In silent disdain He maintained that no sign would be given them, and with God-given might He refrained from using the power He possessed to come down from the Cross. Thus, tempted and tried until the last, He remained above sin, while the mocking priests derided Him.

2. The conversation with the thieves.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

"But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

"And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43)

3. His mother.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

"Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." (John 19:25-27)

Comment:

This tender scene needs no comment. With filial love, He placed His mother under the care of a disciple whom He loved. The mother's heart, on the other hand, was unconsolable.

4. The darkness.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." (Matt. 27:45)

Comment:

For three hours Christ had hung on the Cross. The cruel nails were spreading the wounds; muscles, cramped and twisted, hindered circulation which had likely begun to congest and gorge distended blood vessels; a parched tongue had begun to swell and filled His mouth. We must halt the description.

5. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)
6. A cry for drink.

"I thirst.

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." (John 19:28-29)
7. He commended His spirit to God.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:46)

8. His last words.
   "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." (John 19:30)

Comment:

His holy life was ended, His suffering completed, His work finished. The long-expected Messiah had come, had been rejected and crucified. It was a seemingly ignominious death, yet through it He made the symbol of Christianity throughout the world.

D.–Nature "shudders."

1. "Now a shudder ran through Nature, as its Sun had set." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 610)
2. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." (Matt. 27:51)

E.–Burial.

1. To make sure of death.
   "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.
   "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.
   "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:
   "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." (John 19:31-34)

Comment:

What a mockery was their traditionalism about the Sabbath! These priests and elders of the people, who were responsible for the death of Christ, their rejected Messiah, now worried about their rule that no bodies should be left upon the crosses over the Sabbath! What a mockery in values! They worried about a man-made rule, while because of their vicious fanaticism the Lord of the Sabbath hung crucified.

To hasten death the custom had grown up of breaking the legs of victims. But this they did not do to Christ. Thus the scriptures were fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken." (John 19:36)

In speaking of the Passover sacrifice the old Mosaic law said: "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it." (Num. 9:12) Their carefully prepared sacrifices for the Paschal Supper were thus kept without a broken bone. Their sacrifices were only symbolic of the great sacrifice of Him who died upon the Cross without the breaking of bones. The above method to hasten death was unnecessary, for an actual broken heart had already closed the mortal life of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known.

2. Kind friends took care of the body.

"And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

"Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (John 19:38-40)

"And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." (Matt. 27:60)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The march to Golgotha.

1. How long did the Roman trial likely last? About what time did Pilate turn Jesus over to the Jews?
2. What had weakened Jesus so that He was unable to bear His cross?
3. Who was drafted to carry it?
4. Name the three kinds of crosses. Which kind was used for Jesus?
5. When the women bewailed Him, what did He say to them?
6. Why was there no herald in front of Him crying aloud His crime, as was customary in such cases?

B.–Secured to the Cross.

1. Why was it that they offered Him some wine mixed with myrrh?
2. How were victims made secure to the cross?
3. While they were doing it, what was Christ's prayer?
4. How does this agree with His Sermon on the Mount?
5. What inscription was raised over His head?
6. What question arose between Pilate and the Jews regarding the placard?

C.–Agony on the Cross.

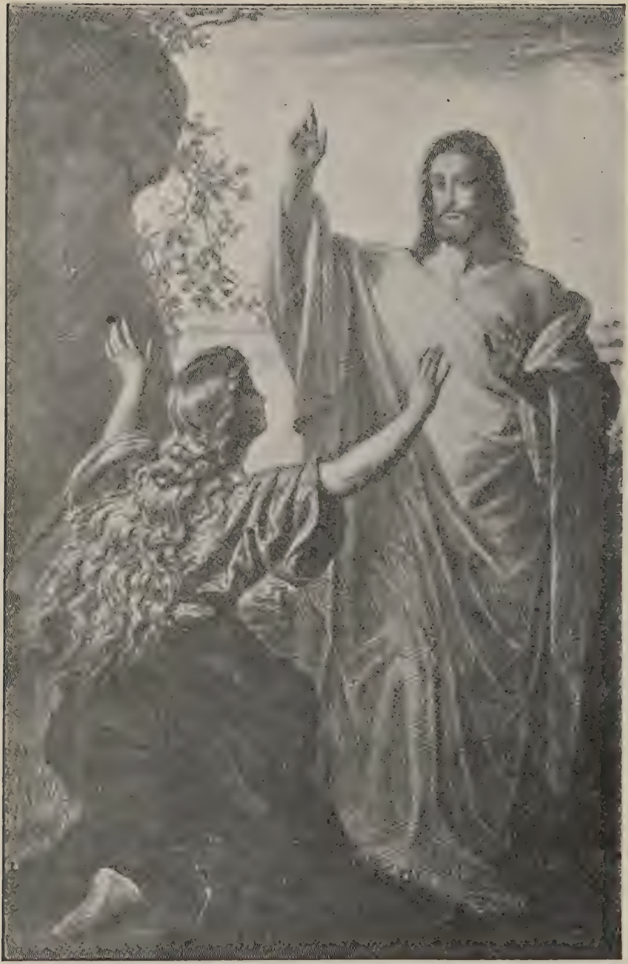
1. What taunts were hurled at Him?
2. Why His forbearance?
3. What was His statement to the thieves who were being crucified with Him?
4. What loving care did He show to His mother?
5. What sufferings of body and mind did He endure?
6. About the ninth hour what was His cry?
7. What were Christ's last words?

D.–Nature shudders.

1. What disturbances in nature happened during the last hours while He hung on the Cross?

E.–Burial.

1. How did the Romans make sure of His death?
2. What prophecy was fulfilled?
3. Who got permission from Pilate to bury Jesus?
4. How and where was He buried?
5. What do you admire in Christ's behavior while the crucifixion proceeded?
6. What have you learned from the problem?



EASTER MORNING

PROBLEM 64

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The mortal life of Jesus ended at the Cross. If He were like other great heroes, death might have ended the story. But His life would not have been complete to have ended at death, for He arose again. This has been believed by countless numbers. However, some have challenged it, and have offered studied explanations. It has been advocated that the disciples stole the body of Jesus away in order to deceive the people. "This idea is now universally discarded even in Germany." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 626)

A second explanation has found some adherents. It is that Jesus was not dead when taken from the Cross, and that during the cool of the night He revived. Enemies of the Christ attempt to shift a fraud upon Jesus Himself. But this offers too many difficulties and absurdities to be longer held by authorities worthy of consideration.

A third challenge is made by those who advance what is called the "vision hypothesis." This recognizes the historical fact that the disciples believed that Christ was resurrected, but they hold that this belief was due to mere visions of Christ. Some contend that the visions were mere imaginations resulting from over-stimulated nervous systems. But the Gospels tell of Christ's appearing not only to one or another of the disciples in their private chambers, but to groups of disciples at times and under circumstances which render the idea of mere vision or imagination or hallucination improbable. "The historical student is shut to the simple acceptance of the gospel narrative." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 627)

PROBLEM: What New Testament scriptural proof is there for the resurrection of Jesus? How did the

Apostles and disciples come to believe that Christ was resurrected?

Bible References: Matt. 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-52; John 20:1-31; I Cor. 15:3-8.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The sepulchre made secure.

1. "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

"Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

"Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first.

"Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matt. 27:62-66)

Comment:

In translating the phrase, "so the last error shall be worse than the first," James Moffat renders it: "The end of the fraud will then be worse than the beginning of it." In the introduction to this lesson we mentioned the fraud theory. From the above passages in Matthew it is clear that the Pharisees, though suspecting fraud, provided against it by sealing the tomb, and by placing a guard of Roman soldiers over it.

B.–At the sepulchre.

1. The women.

a. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they

might come and anoint him.
"And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." (Mark 16:1-2)

b. St. John tells us that when Mary Magdalene saw that the stone was rolled away, and that the sepulchre was empty, "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2)

Comment:

It is but natural that under such trying circumstances each opposing party would suspect the other. Mary suspected fraud when she found the sepulchre empty. Upon first reading the account in St. Mark, the idea is conveyed that all the women entered the sepulchre, and spoke with the angel. Edersheim suggests, however, that according to the more detailed report in St. John, Mary had run immediately back to tell Peter, while the other women entered the sepulchre. After talking with the angel "they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid." (Mark 16:8)

2. Peter and John.

a. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple (John), and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre." (John 20:3-4)

b. John did not enter, but merely looked in. When Peter got there, they both entered,
"And seeth the linen clothes lie,
"And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."
"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that

he must rise again from the dead." (John 20:6-7, 9)

Comment:

This statement seems strange in the light of Christ's repeated statements that He would be killed and would rise the third day. On the other hand, it is clear that they never realized that it could happen, nor did they seem to understand it.

"The effect of what he saw was, that he now believed in his heart that the Master was risen —for till then they had not yet derived from Holy Scripture the knowledge that He must rise again. . . . It was not the belief previously derived from Scripture, that the Christ was to rise from the Dead which led to expectancy of it, but the evidence that He had risen which led them to the knowledge of what Scripture taught on the subject." (Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 634)

c. "Then the disciples went away again unto their own home." (John 20:10)

C.–Mary saw the Master.

1. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre." (John 20:11)

Comment:

Mary doubtlessly had never heard from Christ's lips His teaching concerning the resurrection. The thing uppermost in her mind was the empty tomb. She wished to lovingly complete His burial.

2. But as she looked into the sepulchre, she saw "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." (John 20:12)
3. They asked her why she wept. She repeated her fear that someone had taken the Lord away.

Then she became conscious of another presence. "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." (John 20:14-15)

4. Jesus makes Himself known to Mary.

   "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

   "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20:16-17)

5. Mary returned to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord, and then rehearsed what He had said. (See John 20:18)

D.–The scheme of the elders.

1. In the meantime, news of the opened sepulchre had come to the chief priests. They had made the sepulchre secure by a great boulder and by a Roman guard, but both had failed. A council of the priests and the elders of the people was called. In this meeting a scheme was proposed whereby they would give money to the soldiers, if they would say: "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." (Matt. 28:13-15)

Comment:

This story no doubt accounts for the other side of the challenge of fraud previously mentioned in this lesson. From the time of Justin Martyr, this has been the Jewish explanation. (See Edersheim, Vol. II, p. 637)

E.–Other appearances of the resurrected Lord.

1. To two disciples and to Peter.

"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs."

"And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." (Luke 24:13, 15)

Comment:

Jesus walked with them. Naturally their conversation would be about what had recently happened to Jesus. Jesus spoke of the fulfilment of scriptures, and finally, when they were eating dinner, He "brake bread and blessed it."

"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

"And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

"Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

"And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread." (Luke 24:31, 33-35)

2. To the ten Apostles.

At the betrayal the Apostles had scattered. Only Peter and John followed Jesus to His trial. Peter had stood without and denied Him. The Pharisees had met with apparent success, and Jesus had been crucified. But this did not end the matter. We can well imagine that as the Apostles and a few of the disciples collected together again it was with fear and foreboding. Sorrow and confusion also added to their trouble.

In the midst of it all, they assembled together.
"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (John 20:19)

But they were frightened, so St. Luke tells us, because they supposed they saw a spirit.

"And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

"And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." (Luke 24:38-40, 45-46)

3. To the eleven Apostles eight days later.

"The other disciples therefore said unto him (Thomas), We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

"And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." (John 20:25-28)

4. At the Sea of Galilee.
   a. Soon after this the little group of disciples went into Galilee.
      "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples." (John 21:2)

Comment:

We are not entirely sure of just what motives these disciples had in returning to their old occupation of fishing. Was it to get away for a few days from their trouble and confusion, and the hatred of the Pharisees? Or did it indicate a degree of defeated hope? Whatever the motive, Peter said: "I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." (John 21:3)

   b. Jesus appeared.
      "But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." (John 21:4)
      He learned that they had not caught any fish, so he called to them:
      "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." (John 21:6)
      They did as they were told and so caught many fish. The idea that the person who called was Jesus first came to John, and he said to Peter: "It is the Lord." (John 21:7)
      When Peter heard he jumped into the sea and swam to shore. The others came later in the ship.
      "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."
      "Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

"This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead." (John 21:10, 13-14)

c. His message.

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

"He saith unto him the third time, . . . Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17)

Comment:

Peter had led the others to go fishing. What could have been Christ's purpose in so emphasizing the idea, "Feed my sheep"? It seems that it was a call to Peter to leave his fishing, and go back to the work to which he had been called. There was no time for discouragement. There was great need for him to teach not only the "lambs" but the "sheep" as well. Both the young and the old needed to be fed. May it not be even thus today?

F.–Paul's testimony.

1. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel . . ."

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

"After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

"After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." (I Cor. 15:1, 3-8)

Comment:

The testimony of Paul is strong, but the facts of his life are far stronger. He had gone through the land championing the cause of the Pharisees. By permission he caused the disciples of Christ to be dragged into prison, and stood directing the work when Stephen was stoned to death. But Christ appeared to Paul. After that Paul became a changed man. Thus Paul's testimony of the resurrection, a testimony not only of words but to the extent of giving his own life, comes to us with great force and weight. He becomes principal witness to the resurrection of Jesus in a kind of "ascending climax."

G.–His ascension.

1. Parting instructions.

"And ye are witnesses of these things.

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:48-49)

2. The ascension.

"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

"And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke 24:50-52)

H.–Proofs of the Resurrection.

1. Proof of the resurrection does not rest alone in the scriptural records, but the following great facts lend their support.

  - a. The rise of the Church from the ashes of the crucifixion.
  - b. The establishment of the Lord's day as a substitute for the Sabbath of the Jews.
  - c. Christian experience through the ages.

I.–A final statement.

1. "No fact in history is more certain than these appearances of Jesus to his disciples after his death and burial." (Geo. A. Barton, p. 390)
2. Indeed, the world would not have been converted to a dead Jewish Christ, however His intimate disciples might have continued to live His memory. But they preached everywhere first and foremost the resurrection from the dead! In the language of St. Paul (I Cor. 15:14-15, 20): "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
   "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God . . ."
   "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."
3. These records and testimonies come to us from the past. They have been tested in the fiery crucible of life and experience. But what about our own status? Does Christ still live for us? What shall be the test? He made this clear before He suffered.
   "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17)

II.–Organization of Material.

Introduction.

1. Give the three explanations advanced to show that Christ was not resurrected.
2. Can you answer these objections?

A.–The sepulchre.
  1. What was the request of the Jews with respect to making the sepulchre secure?
  2. How did they do so?

B.–At the sepulchre.
  1. Who came first to the sepulchre early Sunday morning?
  2. What did they observe?
  3. What did Mary Magdalene do?
  4. When Peter and John came, what did they find out?

C.–Mary saw the Master.
  1. When Mary returned, what did she see and learn?

D.–The scheme of the elders.
  1. What attempt to bribe the soldiers was made?

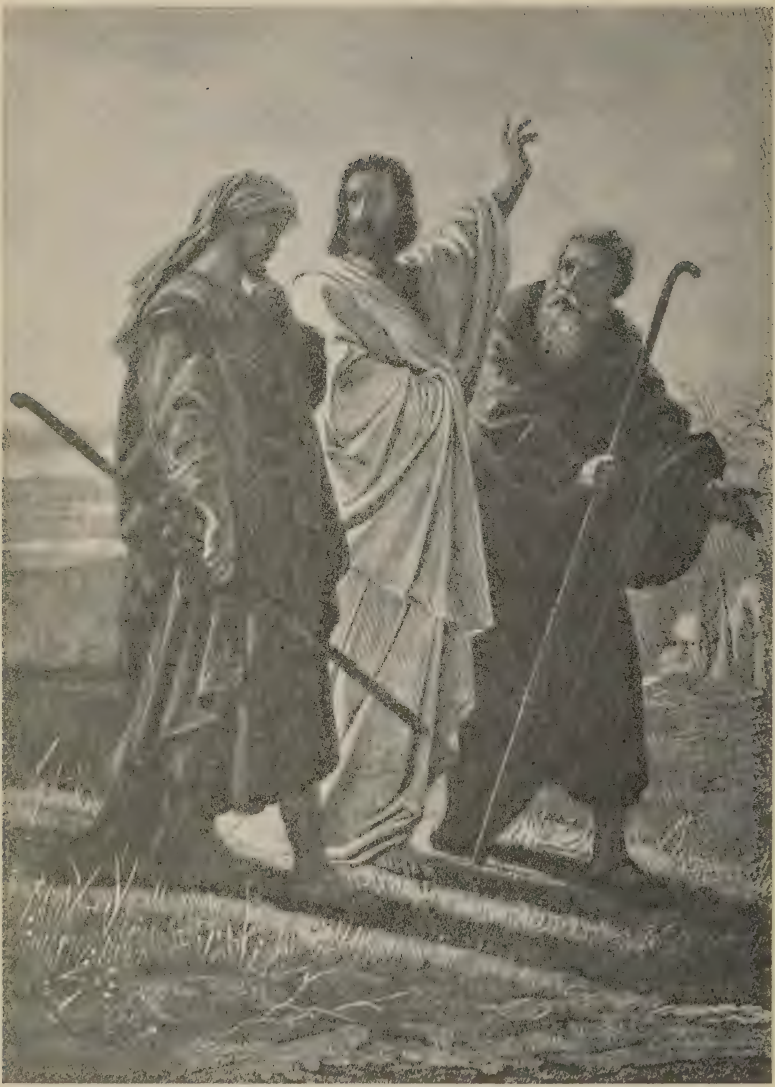
E.–Appearance of the risen Lord.
  1. Make a list of the occasions when Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection. Be able to describe each occasion.
  2. What is the significance of Christ's statements: "Feed my lambs"? "Feed my sheep"?

F.–Paul's testimony.
  1. What was Paul's testimony?

G.–His ascension.
  1. Just before He ascended what was His final instruction?

H.–Further proof.
  1. What other historical development testifies to the genuineness of the resurrection?

I.–A final statement.
  1. How do the facts of the resurrection compare in genuineness with the facts of profane history?
  2. What is our best test of knowing whether it be true or not?
  3. Make a general summary of the problem, and why the Apostles believed Jesus was resurrected.



ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

Problem 65

THE PROMISED POWER

At the time of Christ the Jewish religion had become static. There were several causes: (1) Their reverence for the Law which had been given once and for all through Moses. (2) The mass of oral law and traditionalism which had developed around the Law, so that the latter might be better observed. (3) The cherished belief that they were the descendants of Abraham, the chosen people, who were thereby assured a place in the Kingdom of God. (4) The belief that God was the God of Israel. The hatred and opposition which Christ encountered were caused by these settled traditional beliefs.

Jesus, in referring to this condition, said that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and that they had forgotten the spirit of the Gospel. He had attempted to put spirit and truth into it. To illustrate, in the Sermon on the Mount He said:

> "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:
>
> "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:43-44)

When challenged concerning His observance of the Sabbath, Jesus replied: "It is lawful to do well on the sabbath." With respect to their tradition of the defiling cups, etc., He taught them that it was not that which was taken into the body that defiled, but that which came forth from the heart, such as hatred, covetousness, evil desires, murders, etc.

In short, they believed that righteousness consisted in Law observance, the spirit and motives for worship being largely nullified. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in referring to this condition, makes the following comment: "Robert Louis Stevenson has drawn for us a picture of a man trying with cords and pegs to stake out the shadow of an oak tree, expecting that when he had marked its boundaries the shadow would stay within the limits of the pegs. Yet all the while the mighty globe was turning around in space. He could not keep a tree's shadow static on a moving earth." ("Christianity and Progress," p. 155)

It was just as impossible for the Jews to keep religion static after Jesus came, as it was for the man to keep the shadow of the oak within the set pegs. Christ had been crucified, but His message and spirit "carried on." Our purpose during the remaining pages of this book will be to show how Christ's teachings broke down the traditionalism and finally emerged, under the great leadership of Paul, into the light of a universal religion.

When Christ was taken, His little group of disciples dispersed for fear of the Jews. The blow scattered them into confusion. When they saw Him risen from the dead, hope returned. His parting words were for them to tarry in Jerusalem "until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

PROBLEM: When and how did this power come?

Bible Reference: Acts 2.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The promised Spirit came.

1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

   "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

   "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them:

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:1-4)

Comment:

Pentecost, the day upon which the promise of Christ was fulfilled, came fifty days after the first day of the Passover (Lev. 23:16). This feast was known by other names, as "the feast of harvest" and "the feast of weeks." It was one of the three feasts that were celebrated at Jerusalem. Therefore during this time, as during the Passover, multitudes of Jews from all nations came to Jerusalem.

2. His promise of power.

   "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

3. The promise fulfilled.

   "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)

B.–The multitude came to hear.

1. "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." (Acts 2:6)

Comment:

There were present people from many nations. The following are mentioned: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, people from Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, and Rome. (See Acts 2:9-12) These people were amazed and could not understand the possibility of the whole affair, for they recognized that the disciples were unlettered Galileans.

C.–The explanation.

1. "Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." (Acts 2:13)

2. Peter's reply.

   "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at

Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:
"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." (Acts 2:14-17)

3. Peter testifies of Christ.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:
". . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. ("Death could not hold him." Moffat)
"For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face . . .
"Therefore did my heart rejoice . . .
"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.
"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; ("One of his descendants on his throne." Moffat)
"He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection

of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:22-27, 29-32, 36)

Comment:

So Peter testified with great power of the Christ and His resurrection. A few weeks before, this same Peter had denied Christ three times while the mob, with Jesus bound, were questioning him in the home of Caiaphas the high priest. (See John 18:16-27) Why this strength and faith at the Pentecost? Why his fearlessness and faithfulness throughout the remaining days of his life? Why did he finally give his life for Christ's cause? He made his answer on Pentecost. Filled with the Spirit, he testified of that which he knew and had seen. And not only Peter but all the others likewise were filled with new life. Thus the Cause of Christ did not perish at the Cross, but with great power would now be carried to the ends of the earth.

D.–The results of Peter's speech.

1. Their question.

   "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

2. Peter's reply.

   "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

3. Their acceptance.

   "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41)

E.–The significance.

1. On this day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came. It was the promised Comforter, which would lead them into all truth. Just as Christ had been born anew at His baptism when the Spirit descended, so now with the coming of the Holy Spirit the Apostles were baptized with "fire from heaven," and were born anew. Henceforth it became a spiritual force in their lives. From that moment on they were consecrated to the work of Christ, to evangelize the world.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Introduction.

1. Give four reasons why the Jewish religion had become static.
2. What had Jesus said about it before He was crucified?
3. Why is the relationship of Judaism and Christianity much like that of the pegs and the shadow of the tree?
4. When did the feast of Pentecost come?
5. What promise made by Christ to the Apostles was fulfilled on this day?

B.–The multitudes.

1. What strange thing occurred to the assembled peoples of various nations on the day of Pentecost?

C.–The explanation.

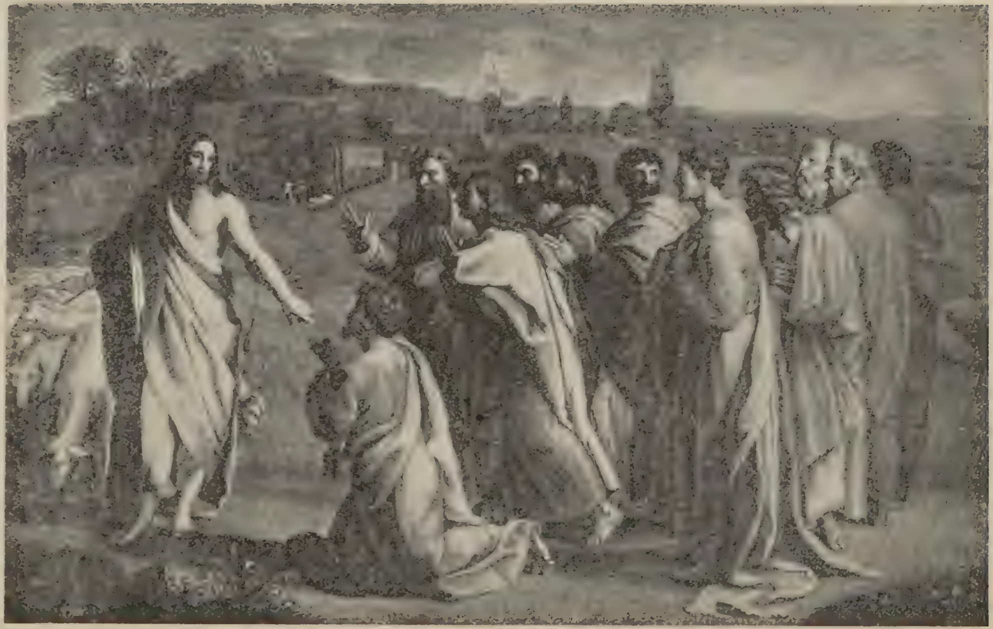
1. What explanation did some offer?
2. What was Peter's answer?
3. Account for this bold answer.

D.–Result.

1. How was Peter's reply accepted?

E.–Significance.

1. Of what significance to the Apostles were the happenings of the day?



CHRIST'S CHARGE TO PETER

Problem 66

THE EVIDENCE OF A VITALIZED FAITH

Following the Pentecost, the Saints communed in prayer and worship, and many went to the Temple daily. They obeyed Christ's new commandment given to the Apostles following the Last Supper, when He said: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34) Those that had possessions sold them and brought the money to the Apostles, for the common good of all, so that none lacked. An illustration will suffice:

> "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,
>
> "Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts 4:36-37)

It was not long, however, before difficulty arose again between the Apostles and the priests and captain of the Temple.

Problem: The same old question of authority came into question. By what power and authority had Peter and John healed the lame man?

Bible References: Acts 3; 4:1-23.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The lame man healed.

1. "Now Peter and John went up together into

the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

"And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; "Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms."

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." (Acts 3:1-3, 6-7)

2. Peter ascribed the power to Christ.

   "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

   "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

   "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just . . .
   "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.
   "And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know." (Acts 3:12-16)

3. What they should do.

   "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come." (Acts 3:19)

B.–The challenge.

1. Peter and John arrested.

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,
"Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
"And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide." (Acts 4:1-3)

Comment:

In discussing the night procedure against Christ, we stated the law that it was illegal to hold trial during the night. It was doubtless in response to this law that these officers now placed Peter and John in custody until the following day.

We observe that these are representatives of the same groups of officers which had crucified the Christ. Peter in no uncertain terms laid the deed at their door.

2. At the council.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,
"And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many more as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." (Acts 4:5-6)

Comment:

It was at this time that the formal demand stated in our problem was made: "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" (Acts 4:7) The passage indicates that a fully attended council of the Sanhedrin had been called. It would appear from the above passage that Annas was the high priest. He was an high priest, and had been the high priest; but at this time Caiaphas was the high priest.

3. Peter's reply.

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." (Acts 4:10)

Comment:

They knew now that Peter and John were followers of Christ. They also knew the man who had been healed, for he must have been a common acquaintance, begging alms at the Temple gate. Therefore what could they say? They asked Peter and John to withdraw from the council while they considered the matter. They decided it would be useless to deny that the man had been healed. They determined, therefore, to threaten them against publishing any further the teaching of Christ.

4. "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." (Acts 4:18)

C.–The reply of Peter and John.

1. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

   "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20)

Comment:

In this incident we see the power of the Holy Spirit manifest through Peter and John. It is another evidence that at the feast of Pentecost, they had been born anew. As Christ had been anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, "to heal the broken-hearted," to "set at liberty them that are bruised," so now Peter and John in the same manner carried forward fearlessly the Lord's message. But they added thereto one most important message. They were witnesses to the fact that Christ was risen from the dead.

II.–Organization of Material.

- A.–The lame man healed.
  1. Describe the incident of the first miracle of healing after Pentecost.
- B.–The challenge.
  1. What did the Sanhedrinists do about the incident?
  2. What question did they ask?
  3. By what authority had Peter healed the man?
  4. What demand did the Jews make?
- C.–Peter's reply.
  1. Give the reply which was made by Peter and John.
  2. Point out the significance of their fearless answer.

PROBLEM 67

A RESULT OF PERSECUTION

PROBLEM: How may we account for the persecution which scattered the Saints? What were the significant results of the process?

Bible Reference: Acts, chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

PROBLEMS CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The growth in membership was a thorn in the sides of the rulers.

1. At the feast of Pentecost three thousand members had been baptized and added to the church.
2. When Peter healed the lame man at the gates of the Temple, many people were amazed and followed the Apostles. Peter called them to repentance, and preached that Christ had risen from the dead.
   "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." (Acts 4:4)
3. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts 5:14)
4. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." (Acts 6:7)

Comment:

It hardly need be said that such progress in membership was not pleasing to the established religionists. Instead of having crushed the cause of Jesus, the Jewish rulers had given it an impetus. When the Spirit came to the Apostles on Pentecost, it gave them faith—a faith that knew no fear. Nations may be conquered, but the heart of man imbued with the spirit of Jesus cannot be laid low. Thus the work progressed. Because of it there were indeed bitter rumblings among the Jewish priestcraft.

B.–The high priest was angered and was determined to check the new religion.

1. "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,
"And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." (Acts 5:17, 18)

Comment:

The Apostles were meeting with great opposition from the Sadducees, who did not believe in resurrection and immortality. The more the Apostles advocated that Christ had risen, the more the Sadducees objected:
"Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." (Acts 4:2)

✓ During the night the Apostles were released from prison by an angel. In the morning when the council sent for them, the rulers must have been astounded when the report came. "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." (Acts 5:25)

2. Apostles before the council.
   a. "Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts 5:28)
   b. Peter and the other Apostles replied:
   ✓ " . . . We ought to obey God rather than men.
   "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.
   "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:29-32)

Comment:

These were bold statements before the supreme council of the Jews, to the very "ring" that had been instrumental in killing Christ. It indicates with what vigor and strength and with what convictions these Apostles were pressing the work of God.

c. The priests' reaction.

"When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them." (Acts 5:33)

d. Better advice.

"Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; (asked the Apostles to leave for a moment)

"Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

* * *

"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." (Acts 5:34-39)

Comment:

When the Pharisees were about to take Christ, you will remember that Nicodemus befriended him by saying, "Doth our law condemn a man before it hear him?" Now in the present case another Pharisee, Gamaliel, one of the greatest of Jewish teachers, protected the cause. There seems good ground for believing that many of the Pharisees were being attracted to the new religion, and that the Sadducees had become the champions of the opposition.

e. Result of Gamaliel's advice.
"And to him they agreed:" (Acts 5:40)

f. Their disposition of the case.
" . . . and when they had called the apostles, and beaten (whipped) them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." (Acts 5:40)

g. The Apostles answered with more teaching.
"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:42)

Comment:

Of course the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrin had not given the Apostles authority to preach and teach in the Temple. They no doubt felt that they had no right at all to teach. This should have been done by the regularly ordained Rabbis. When the Apostles, who had been sent by Jesus, would not cease, the anger of the rulers daily grew more bitter. Thus the preaching of the Apostles became a cause for persecution.

C.–Stephen called and the results.

1. Reason for the call.

The church was growing fast. They had all things in common, so that there should be no poor. The Apostles had work to perform beyond their strength. In the rush of it all, they had failed to care properly for the daily distribution of food, etc., and there "arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." (Acts 6:1)

✓ The Apostles in answer said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." (Acts 6:2)

So they called the disciples together, and bade them select seven men who were honest and full of the Spirit and of wisdom.

2. The men who were chosen.

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." (Acts 6:5, 6)

Comment:

Of these men we are at this time particularly interested in Stephen. In passing, however, it is well to note that the seven men had Greek names. No doubt they were not all Hellenists, for Greek names were quite common among the Hebrews (Andrew, Nicodemus). Probably Stephen was a Greek-speaking Jew.

D.–Persecution for preaching reached its climax in the case of Stephen.

✓ 1. Stephen's power.

"And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. . . .

"And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." (Acts 6:8, 10)

2. Difficulties in the Synagogues.

"Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen." (Acts 6:9)

Comment:

The Libertines were people who had been carried to Rome as prisoners of war, and who later were freed from slavery. The Cyrenians came from Cyrene, a city whose population was about one-fourth Jews. The Alexandrians had come from Alexandria, a city in Egypt founded in 332 B. C. by the great warrior, after whom the city was named. It is thought that St. Paul belonged to the group from Cilicia. These people, one and all, had been no match for the wisdom of Stephen.

3. They summoned Stephen before the council.
   a. The complaint.

      "... We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. . . .
      "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:
      "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us." (Acts 6:11, 13, 14)
   b. Stephen's reply.

      When asked by the high priest if the charges were so, Stephen made his famous speech recorded in Acts 7:1-53. It is too lengthy for us to give here. He traced briefly the history of the people from Abraham until Jesus. His purpose seems to have been to show that the "Mosaic Law and the temple were not indispensable for the worship of God." He showed by their own history how the great Jewish fathers Abraham, Jacob, and Moses had worshipped before the Law was given and before any Temple was built. Early in Christ's ministry, He told the woman of Samaria that the place of worship was not essential, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John 4:23) Stephen was preaching the same doctrine. Thus he became after Christ the first Christian teacher to maintain that the Law and the Temple were not indispensable for worship. This the orthodox Jews believed to be blasphemous teaching.

But before completing his answer to the charges, he began to criticize the rulers, saying, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7:52)

c. The results of his speech.

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. . . .

"And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" (Acts 7:54, 58, 59)

Comment:

Stephen was the first Christian martyr. Without the consent of Pilate or without even referring the matter to him, Stephen was killed. The spirit was bitter. The mob acted at once. Stephen received no justice. Paul was among the group, no doubt directing the witnesses, whose duty it was to carry out the execution.

E.–The general results of these three series of events.

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . .

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:1, 4)

Comment:

The ceaseless preaching of the Apostles, their vigorous attack upon the priests for the killing of Jesus, and the great success of the work, precipitated the above mentioned widespread and determined persecution. The Saints had to flee for their lives. The conditions remind us of the tufted seeds of plants which, when scattered far and wide by the wind, find soil in which to grow and begin in diverse places a new life. So the scattered Saints in widely different communities found fit soil for the gospel message. They preached it everywhere. Thus in numerous places little groups of believers in Christ arose. Christianity had taken its first step beyond the pale of Judaism.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Growth of the church.

1. How many joined the church following the spiritual demonstration during Pentecost?
2. What increase resulted from Peter's healing of the lame man?
3. What other indications suggest that the membership was growing?
4. Account for this growth.

B.–The high priest determined to check the growth.

1. How was it that the Sadducees had become the leaders in opposing the Apostles?
2. Relate the incident of their casting the Apostles into prison again. What was the result?
3. When Peter was reminded that they had told him to quit preaching Christ, what was his reply?
4. Give the priests' reaction.
5. What advice did Gamaliel give? How was it received?
6. How was the case disposed of?

C.–Stephen.

1. Who was Stephen? Why was he called to office?

D.–Persecution.

1. Explain how it was that Stephen and the Jews of foreign countries fell into dispute.
2. What accusation did they make before the Sanhedrin?
3. Give a summary of Stephen's reply.
4. What were the results?
5. Account for the failure of justice.

E.–General results.

1. What were the general results of the widespread persecution?

PROBLEM 68

CHRISTIANITY WON PAUL, THE PHARISEE

After the Saints had been scattered because of the bitter persecution waged against them in Jerusalem, they went into various communities throughout Palestine, penetrating even as far north as Antioch. The gospel of Christ was preached wherever they located. Philip, one of the seven men chosen along with Stephen, to make distribution of substance to the people, moved into Samaria. There he began vigorous missionary work.

The Samaritans whom he taught were really a sort of mixed race. They descended from the Assyrian colonists who movd into Palestine at the time when the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, and Israelites who escaped this captivity. There was intermarriage between the Assyrian and Jewish women. The descendants were the Samaritans. They claimed to be Israelites. They believed in the Pentateuch, but not in the mass of oral law of the Jews. Worshippers of Jehovah, they claimed the right to share in the rebuilding of Jerusalem. When this claim was not allowed (See Ezra and Nehemiah), they became enemies to the Jews, and set up their rival temple on Mt. Gerizim. The Jews, particularly the Pharisees, despised this people because they were an impure (mixed) race.

When Christ first sent the Apostles forth to preach, He said: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5, 6) Again, the Jews, with strict interpretation, held that the gospel was for Israel and those who became Jews by adoption, i. e., proselytes of the kingdom. One of the severest tests the Christian Church had to meet was the question of a universal gospel. This will be discussed in a later problem. However, before His ascension the gospel writers all agree that Jesus commissioned the Apostles to preach to all nations. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) This idea was not grasped easily, even by the Christian Jews. It may have been that Philip was of Jewish-Greek descent. For that reason he had less scruples in preaching to the Samaritans. His work was successful. It was recognized by the Apostles, when Peter and John were sent there to baptize the converts with the Holy Ghost. Later, Philip baptized the Ethiopian treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia, a country to the south of Egypt. This case is important, for it marks one of the first, if not the first, case of the gospel going to an entirely foreign race. It is the first distinct step to making Christianity universal.

So it was that through the scattering of the Saints by persecution the gospel was spread, not only by Philip but by many others. Noting this, the high priest, with the members of the Sanhedrin, grew more alarmed. To them this new sect was like a cancerous growth which, when cut out, spreads to other parts. It had to be put down. Thus permission was granted for a general persecution to be waged.

PROBLEM: Who became a leader of this general persecution? What were the results?

Bible Reference: Acts 9.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–On to Damascus.

1. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
   "And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might

bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts 9:1, 2)

Comment:

Saul, later known as Paul, was a native of Tarsus, an important city in Cilicia. He was a Roman citizen, born of well-to-do parents who sent him as a young man to Jerusalem to be trained in the Rabbinical school, under the great teacher Gamaliel. "He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin," and a very ardent Pharisee. The Romans allowed the Sanhedrin to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction (except in capital cases) over the whole Jewish community, even outside of Palestine." (Dummelow, p. 830) This is the reason why Paul went forth to Damascus with authority and with guards from the Sanhedrin.

B.–His vision.

1. "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
   "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3, 4)
2. Paul's question.
   "Who art thou, Lord?"
3. The reply.
   "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." (Acts 9:5)
4. The result.
   "And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6)

C.–Paul's conversion completed.

1. "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

"And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts 9:8-9)

2. Ananias sent to Paul.

"And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

"And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight." (Acts 9:11, 12)

Comment:

Ananias was probably head of the Christian body at Damascus. Later, tradition makes him one of the seven chosen along with Stephen, also one of the bishops of Damascus, so confirmed by Peter and Andrew.

News of Paul's designs had already spread ahead of him, and Ananias, being informed of it, was fearful.

3. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:15-16)

4. Paul restored and baptized.

"And Ananias went . . . and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." (Acts 9:17, 18)

Comment:

This meant much to the Church. Not only would it stop the most bitter persecutor, but it would secure to the Church the ability of one of the greatest Apostles and missionaries known in all history.

D.–Paul in retirement.

1. "But when it pleased God . . .
   "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:
   "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." (Gal. 1:15, 16, 17)

Comment:

In the New Translation by James Moffat the above passages have been made somewhat clearer:
" . . . instead of consulting with any human being, instead of going up to Jerusalem to see those who had been apostles before me, I went off at once to Arabia, and on my return I came back to Damascus."
The vision had completely upset all of Paul's previous convictions. He had been one of the strictest of the Pharisees, believing and living according to all the laws and traditions of that party. But all that must now give way to the new light which came from the resurrected Christ. Paul must have been thrown into confusion with himself, with his old customs and habits of thought and action. A period of adjustment was necessary. So Paul retired into Arabia for some months, for thought and study and prayer.

E.–The significance of Paul's conversion.

1. St. Paul always maintained that the appearance to him of the risen Christ was an objective reality. The test of reality is the effect it had upon him. It was the turning point in his life. It was more; from this moment he was imbued with power and with faith to preach the gospel of the risen Christ with greater force and vigor than any man known to the world. Knowing the above, can anyone deny the essential aspects of the story of his conversion?
2. Again, Paul's conversion marked definitely the

turning-point in the history of Christianity. It brought to focus the ideas of Stephen and Philip, that the gospel was for all mankind; for Paul soon "perceived that the ceremonial Law was no longer binding and his perception of this fact enabled him to preach Christianity as a universal religion." (Dummelow, p. 830) However, the Jewish Christians were not of this point of view, hence at this time Paul had to wage his battle almost alone.

II.–Organization of Material.
  A.–Introduction.
    1. Who was Philip? Where did he labor as a missionary? What success followed?
    2. Who were the Samaritans? What did they believe?
    3. Why was the work of Philip important?
    4. Who was Saul?
    5. Why did Saul go to Damascus at this time? What right was granted him by the Sanhedrin?
  B.–Saul's vision.
    1. Describe Saul's vision.
  C.–Conversion.
    1. What were the immediate results of the vision?
  D.–Retirement
    1. What was probably Paul's purpose in going into retirement after his vision? Where did he go?
  E.–Significance.
    1. Of what significance to Paul and to the Church was Paul's conversion?

PROBLEM 69

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

After some months Paul returned from his Arabian retirement to Damascus. He began forthwith to preach in the synagogues of the Jews. His message, of course, was that Christ, the Son of God, had risen. The people were amazed, for they recognized Paul as the one who had come to Damascus with authority to bind the disciples and take them before the high priest at Jerusalem. It was not long, however, until the Jews became angry with him and "took counsel to kill him" . . . and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

"Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall, in a basket." (Acts 9:25) He had been about Damascus for three years; when escaping he returned to Jerusalem, evidently for a personal consultation with Peter. "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Gal. 1:18, 19) Thus ends the story of the persecutor, Paul the Pharisee.

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts 9:31)

During this period of comparative peace the Apostles went from city to city, organizing the disciples, healing the sick, and setting things generally in order. Peter was particularly active in this work. (Acts 9:32-43)

The idea that the gospel was for the Gentile as well as the Jew, and that each stood before the Lord on equal footing, was developing. Stephen understood this matter first, then Philip, and later Paul. The original Apostles, however, were holding fast to Christ's first statement to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5-6) Peter was one of the first of these to learn that the gospel was for all mankind.

PROBLEM: How did Peter become converted that God was no respecter of persons, that the Gentile stood equal with the Jew before the Lord? What did his brother Apostles think about the idea?

Bible Reference: Acts 10 and 11.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–Cornelius.

1. "There was a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, ("a captain in an Italian regiment")
   "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.
   "He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.
   . . . He "said, What is it, Lord?" The angel replied, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God . . . send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter . . . he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." (Acts 10:1-6)

Comment:

The fortress of Cæsarea had been built by Herod the Great. "The majority of the inhabitants were Greeks, but Jews enjoyed equal right." It is said that Philip the Evangelist came from Cæsarea. "It was the capital of the Roman province and the residence of the governor." (Dummelow, p. 831) Following the message of the angel, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier and sent them to Joppa.

B.–Peter's vision.

1. Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. . . .
   "And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth;
   "Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.
   "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat." (Acts 10:11-13)
2. " . . . Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." (Acts 10:14)
3. The voice answered, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.
   "This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven." (Acts 10:15, 16)
4. Peter went to Cornelius.
   a. "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.
      "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.
      "Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?" (Acts 10:19-21)

Comment:

They told him of the angel's message to Cornelius, that he should send for Peter. Peter lodged them for the night. Then he accompanied them back to Cornelius, who met them and fell down to worship him; but Peter bade him rise, for said he: "I myself also am a man."

b. Peter was troubled concerning the tradition of the Jews. "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." (Acts 10:28)

C.–The significance of Peter's vision.

After Cornelius told his story, Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35)

Comment:

Cornelius was evidently an adherent of Judaism already. In associating with him Peter did not go as far as Paul did later, but the step was an important one. It advanced the Church much nearer to the idea that Jesus was sent to the world, and not only to the Jews. The new sect was advancing beyond a mere sect of Judaism. It was moving out into the uncharted ocean.

D.–Peter told Cornelius of Jesus.

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power. . . .

"And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

"Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

"Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." (Acts 10:38-41)

E.–The Holy Ghost came.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." (Acts 10:44)

Comment:

Those in the audience who had complied strictly with all the laws of the Jews were astonished that the Holy Ghost had come upon these Gentiles. Only Peter seemed to have understood.

F.–The baptism.

"Can any man forbid water," said Peter, "that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:47, 48)

G.–The action questioned.

1. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him." (Acts 11:2)
2. The accusation.

   "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." (Acts 11:3)

Comment:

This is the same old complaint which the Pharisees raised against Christ, when He ate dinner with the publicans and sinners. Peter has the Master's example as precedent. This, however, he did not urge, but instead told of the stronger evidence, his vision at Joppa. (See Acts 11:5-17)

H.–The Apostles at Jerusalem assented to Peter's action.

"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:18)

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The gospel to the Gentiles.

1. When Paul returned from Arabia, what did he do? Give the results.
2. Tell the story of Cornelius.

B.–Peter's vision.
  1. Describe Peter's vision.

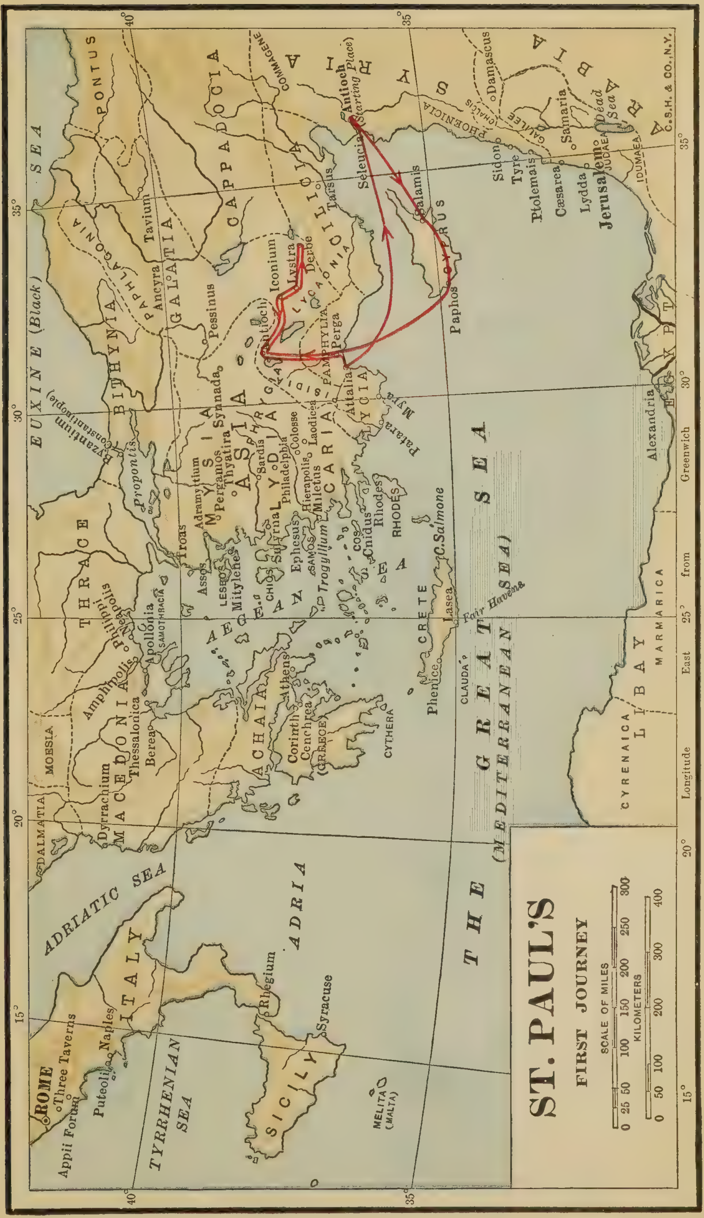
C.–Importance of the vision.
  1. Of what significance was the vision?

D.–Peter testified of Christ.
  1. What did he tell Cornelius about Jesus?

E.–The Holy Ghost.
  1. What importance did Peter see in the fact that the Holy Ghost came to Cornelius before baptism?

F.–Cornelius and others baptized.
  1. Peter invites a reason why they should not be baptized. Why?
  2. What kind of baptism was it? How do you know?

G.–Peter's action questioned.
  1. Why was Peter's action questioned by the Jewish Christians?
  2. What did they learn from his answer?



ST. PAUL'S

FIRST JOURNEY

SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 100 150 200 250 300
KILOMETERS
0 50 100 200 300 400
Longitude East from Greenwich
C.S.H. & CO., N.Y.
Antioch (Starting Place)
Seleucia
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
Perga
Attalia
PAMPHYLIA
Antioch
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
LYCAONIA
CILICIA
Tarsus
CAPPADOCIA
GALATIA
Ancyra
Pessinus
Tavium
PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
BITHYNIA
EUXINE (Black) SEA
Byzantium (Constantinople)
Propontis
ASIA
MYSIA
LYDIA
CARIA
LYCIA
PHRYGIA
PISIDIA
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
Pergamos
Thyatira
Synnada
Sardis
Philadelphia
Smyrna
Ephesus
Miletus
Colosse
Laodicea
Hierapolis
Trogyllium
Cnidus
Rhodes
RHODES
Patara
Myra
LESBOS
Mitylene
CHIOS
SAMOS
COS
AEGEAN SEA
THRACE
MACEDONIA
Philippi
Neapolis
Amphipolis
Apollonia
SAMOTHRACIA
Thessalonica
Berea
Dyrrachium
MOESIA
DALMATIA
ACHAIA
Athens
Corinth
Cenchrea
(GREECE)
CYTHERA
CRETE
Phenice
Lasea
Fair Havens
C. Salmone
CLAUDA
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
ADRIATIC SEA
ADRIA
ITALY
ROME
Three Taverns
Appii Forum
Puteoli
Naples
Rhegium
TYRRHENIAN SEA
SICILY
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
LIBYA
CYRENAICA
MARMARICA
EGYPT
Alexandria
SYRIA
COMMAGENE
PHOENICIA
Damascus
Sidon
Tyre
Ptolemais
GALILEE
Samaria
Cæsarea
Lydda
Jerusalem
JUDAEA
IDUMAEA
Dead Sea
ARABIA
CHALCIS
15°
20°
25°
30°
35°
40°

Problem 70

PAUL'S FIRST MISSION TO THE GENTILES

When Stephen was stoned to death, and persecution grew so bitter that the Saints had to flee from Jerusalem, a number of very faithful disciples settled in Antioch. There they preached the gospel with great success, and many believed. When the news of the success reached the Apostles at Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to see what was being done. He was very well pleased. After careful consideration, he saw the great opportunities which awaited. Remembering the experience of Saul, he determined to have him come to labor in Antioch. Almost ten years had passed since Saul (Paul) had escaped from Antioch, soon after his great vision. We know nothing concerning Paul's work during this time further than this, that he returned to Tarsus and no doubt worked at his trade as tent maker. Some think it is likely that he did a little preaching. Barnabas learned in some way where Paul was, so he went to Tarsus. Finding Paul, he persuaded him to return to Antioch, where for a year they together labored among the people preaching faith in Christ.

Problem: What is the most significant result of Paul's first missionary journey?

Bible Reference: Acts 13.

Problem Considered. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The call of Barnabas and Paul.

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene . . . and Saul.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the

Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:1-3)

Comment:

Barnabas and Paul took leave from Antioch about March, 47 A. D. They returned after laboring a little over two years, i. e., about July or August, 49 A. D.)See Wm. M. Ramsey, "St. Paul, the Traveler and Roman Citizen," p. 128)

B.–The first mission-journey.

1. At Cyprus.

From Antioch they sailed down the river to Selemia, a port on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Leaving here they went to Salamis, a city on the island of Cyprus.

Barnabas was a native of Cyprus. It is but natural, therefore, that he should desire to return and explain the gospel of Christ to his own friends and family. Besides, it contained a large Jewish population, to which at this time the Apostles confined most of their attention. "At Salamis they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister." (Acts 13:5) They preached as they went. Soon they reached Paphos, situated on the southwestern coast of the island. Here they converted the governor, Sergius Paulus.

It was here at Paphos, within the halls of the governor, that Saul's name was changed to Paul. It is said that the inhabitants of Syria and other lands had generally two names, his native name and a Greek name. The former he used when he was among his own people, the latter when he was on a more public stage or in Greek surround-ings. In Paul's case he has hitherto been among Jews and we have heard only his Hebrew name (Saul). . . . The change in the use of his names marks the critical departure he is making in the policy of the Church, a Gentile name for an Apostle of the Gentiles. (Fred J. Rae, p. 261)

2. In Pamphylia.

"Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem." (Acts 13:13)

Comment:

Previous to this time when the writers referred to the journey, they wrote Barnabas and Paul. From now on Paul takes the lead. We note in the above reference, it reads, "Paul and his company."

We do not know why John Mark left the party. Whatever his reason was, Mark must have offended Paul, for Paul would not allow Mark to go on later missionary journeys with him. When Barnabas insisted, Paul and Barnabas separated.

3. In Pisidia Antioch.

a. "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia." (Acts 13:14)

Comment:

According to Wm. M. Ramsay this phrase, "Antioch in Pisidia," is a corruption. He maintains that Pisidian Antioch (strictly a Phrygian city towards Pisidia) was the center of the region called Phrygia. (Ramsay, p. 104) In going from Perga to Pisidian Antioch they passed from the Roman province Pamphylia to the Roman province of Galatia. So until they returned to Perga, the rest of their forward journey lay in Galatia. Ramsay estimates that Paul must have labored in Antioch for from two to six months. One day they entered the synagogue on the sabbath. "And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." (Acts 13:15)

b. Paul spoke.

He reviewed the history of the coming of Christ as a descendant of David; that John the Baptist came as His forerunner; finally that the Jews by permission of Pilate crucified Him; and later that He was raised from the dead, etc. Then he advocated doctrines which superseded the Law of Moses.

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:38, 39)

Comment:

This is an outspoken declaration that the gospel of Christ had superseded the Mosaic laws. For saying less Stephen had been stoned to death. For some reason it did not at the time seem to offend the Jews at Antioch. Later, when they had had time to think it over, rumblings of opposition began. He was invited to speak again the following Sabbath. At this time "almost the whole city" came to hear them.

c. "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." (Acts 13:45)

d. Turning to the Gentiles for the first time. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, *we turn to the Gentiles*.

"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:46, 47)

Comment:

The climax of this whole misisonary journey was now reached. The initial step in the separation of Christianity from Judaism was taken. Accordingly, the "first thoroughly Gentile congregation separate from the synagogue was established at Pisidia Antioch." (Ramsay, p. 102) Of course the Gentiles were greatly pleased, and many became disciples. For some time "the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."

e. Jewish reaction.

But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

4. In Iconium.

"And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed." (Acts 14:1)

Comment:

However, there soon developed opposition, not only from the Jews, but from the Gentiles as well. Learning of a plot to stone them, they left the city.

5. At Lystra and Derbe.

a. At Lystra when Paul was preaching, he saw a lame man of great faith, whom he healed. This affected the people greatly, and they said,

"The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker." (Acts 14:12)

Comment:

For the first time Christianity is mentioned as coming into conflict with the Roman pagan religion and superstition. The Romans believed in many gods. Jupiter was the greatest of them all. He was the great sky god of light, of rain, and of sunshine, whose favor was so essential for the fields and for the vineyards.
The superstitious people would have worshipped Paul and Barnabas, had they not persuaded them to stop.

b. "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead." (Acts 14:19)

6. On the return journey.

After having revived, on the next day they went to Derbe, a distance of about twenty miles. Then returning, he visited again Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, where he confirmed the disciples. They also set elders in every church (branch) as leaders of the members. Leaving Antioch, they passed throughout Pisidia, Pamphylia, visiting Perga and then Attalia. From this place they set sail for Antioch in Syria, from which place they had begun their journey a little over two years previous.

A SUMMARY.

Little was said concerning the dangers and hardships of Paul and Barnabas during this journey. These were certainly great. Churches had been founded at strategic points in Asia Minor, at Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The climax of the journey was reached when Paul, now an Apostle to the Gentiles, turned to establish a Gentile Church at Antioch, thus initiating a policy of preaching salvation through faith in Christ rather than through the Mosaic Law.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The call of Barnabas and Paul.

1. How were Barnabas and Paul called?
2. When did they begin their mission?

B.–The first mission-journey.

1. Describe what happened on the island of Cyprus.
2. Leaving Cyprus, where did they go?
3. Who left the company at this place? How was Paul affected?
4. What opportunity was given Paul to preach at Pisidia Antioch?
5. Summarize Paul's speech.
6. Why was it that Paul for the first time turned his attention to the Gentiles?
7. State the significance of this action. What was the reaction to it by the Jews?
8. Explain how it was that the Gentiles called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius.
9. What persecution was developed at Iconium?
10. Leaving Iconium, where did they go?
11. It was now time to go back home. Which way did they return?
12. What important things had been accomplished?
13. With respect to the future policy of missionary work, what was the most important innovation which Paul had made?

PROBLEM 71

THE CRISIS

For some years Christianity had now been in progress. During all this time there had been two factions. One party was conservative, and believed that Christ had come only to the Jew. They held that the Mosaic Law must be observed by Jew and Gentile alike. In short, for them Christianity was merely a sect of Judaism. On the other hand, there had been a gradual development toward a broader view by another considerable faction. We have called attention to this in our problems concerning Stephen, Philip, Peter's vision, and lastly Paul.

PROBLEM: This question of whether salvation came through the Mosaic Law and Christ, or through Christ alone, threatened division in Christianity. How was it settled?

Bible Reference: Acts 15.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The challenge.

> "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1)

Comment:

Antioch had become more of a center for Christian worship than was Jerusalem. The liberal tendencies and practices of the Antiochan Christians alarmed the orthodox Christians from Jerusalem. The men spoken of above in Acts 15:1 came to Antioch evidently upon their own responsibility (Acts 15:24), and with the determination to bring the Church back to a more orthodox observance of the Law.

Their arguments must have produced no little confusion, and even won adherents away from Paul. Barnabas himself wavered. The question was a vital one. Recognizing this, Paul threw himself into the conflict with all his power and strength. He did not object, if the Jewish Christians preferred to observe the Mosaic Law. He, however, believed the entire Mosaic system was a preparation for Christianity, and that it had become obsolete as a power of salvation when Christ came. In compliance therewith he maintained that Gentiles should become Christians on equality with Jews, and that, too, without circumcision. The problem grew more and more serious. It became evident that some authoritative decision had to be made. It was therefore agreed to refer the whole matter to the council of Apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

B.–Before the council of Apostles.

1. "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question." (Acts 15:2)
2. "And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter."
   a. After there had been considerable debate Peter said:

      "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (See Acts 10:20)
      "And God . . . bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

      "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

      "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." (Acts 15:7-11)

b. Paul and Barnabas speak. They told how God had recognized their ministry among the Gentiles by miracles and wonders through them. (Acts 15:12)

c. James, the brother of Christ, finally offers the decision:

"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

"But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." (Acts 15:19, 20)

Comment:

Why were the Gentile Christians asked to abstain from the above mentioned things? "Because all four were practised in Gentile idolatrous worship." (F. J. Rae, p. 275) Certainly the liberal Christians were no more in favor of idolatry and impure living than was the Judaistic party. Upon this they could agree, and therefore there could be fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, the Gentiles would have to abandon all superstition and idolatrous worship, dropping their belief in many gods and accepting the God of the Christians, who had sent His Son Jesus Christ to bring salvation to mankind.

d. Word sent to Antioch.

A letter was written setting forth the above four points as given by James. Then Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas were delegated along with Paul and Barnabas to take the decision back to Antioch.

e. " . . . and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

> "Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation." (Acts 15:30, 31)

Comment:

The author of Acts leads us to believe that the question was settled. This was not the case, however. The dispute was prolonged and bitter. Officially, the matter had been decided in favor of Paul's idea; this was a great victory for Paul. But the Judaistic Christian faction persisted, and whenever possible hindered and obstructed Paul's work, so that he had to continue his fight until the end. The "Judaizers" finally died out as a heretical sect sometime during the fourth century after Christ. Thus Christianity did not become a Jewish sect, but was saved for the whole world. From this time on, it entered into a new era which we might call church extension.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The challenge.

1. What question of policy and doctrine threatened at this time to divide the Church?

B.–Before the council.

1. Who were sent from Antioch to Jerusalem to present the problems before the Apostles?
2. What was Peter's attitude?
3. After Paul and Barnabas had presented their view, what was the judgment of James?
4. Why were these restrictions made?
5. How was the matter authoritatively presented at Antioch, where the trouble arose?
6. Even though the judgment did not settle the matter for the Jewish Christians, of what significance was the decision?

PROBLEM 72

CHRISTIANITY INTRODUCED INTO EUROPE

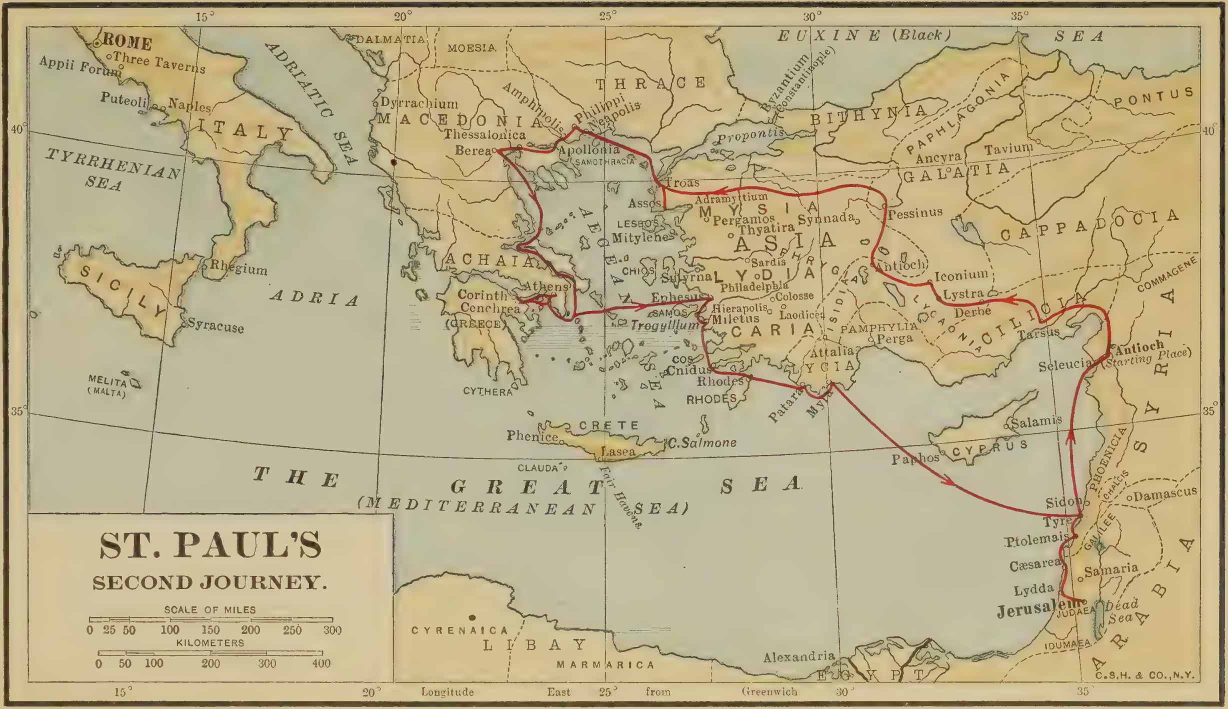
Paul and Barnabas, together with Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas had returned to Antioch with the decree from the council at Jerusalem. The work in Antioch progressed with greater vigor than ever before. Soon Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained. Two years had now passed since Paul and Barnabas had returned from their first mission. Paul thought it time to go again. Barnabas readily agreed. However, they fell into dispute with respect to taking John Mark with them. Paul opposed his going; for Paul remembered how John had left them in Pamphylia before, while they were on their first journey. Barnabas pleaded for him and was willing to vouch for him, if Paul would give him another chance. These two great and good men evidently quarreled over the matter. In the end, Barnabas took Mark, and sailed for Cyprus; Paul took Silas. Thus, old friends parted. In one way, this was most unfortunate, for Barnabas went out of the picture. We do not hear of him much thereafter. The historian failed to record his labors. Be that as it may, we know now that Mark was worthy of another chance. Paul later recognized this. (2 Tim. 4:11) Mark accompanied Peter also. (1 Peter 5:13) Finally, Mark became the author of the Gospel of St. Mark, which no doubt represents facts which he learned from Peter.

PROBLEM: By whom was Christianity first preached in Europe? When was it preached? And with what success?

Bible References: Acts 15:34-41; Acts 16, 17; 18:1-22.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.



ST. PAUL'S

SECOND JOURNEY.

SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 100 150 200 250 300
KILOMETERS
0 50 100 200 300 400
15°
20°
25°
30°
35°
40°
Longitude East from Greenwich
ROME
Three Taverns
Appii Forum
Puteoli
Naples
ITALY
ADRIATIC SEA
TYRRHENIAN SEA
SICILY
Rhegium
Syracuse
ADRIA
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
Dyrrachium
MACEDONIA
Thessalonica
Berea
Amphipolis
Philippi
Neapolis
Apollonia
SAMOTHRACIA
THRACE
Byzantium (Constantinople)
Propontis
EUXINE (Black) SEA
BITHYNIA
PAPHLAGONIA
PONTUS
Ancyra
Tavium
GALATIA
CAPPADOCIA
COMMAGENE
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
MYSIA
Pergamos
Thyatira
Synnada
Pessinus
LESBOS
Mitylene
ASIA
AEGEAN SEA
ACHAIA
Athens
Corinth
Cenchrea
(GREECE)
CYTHERA
CHIOS
Smyrna
LYDIA
Sardis
PHRYGIA
Philadelphia
Colosse
Ephesus
SAMOS
Trogyllium
Hierapolis
Miletus
Laodicea
CARIA
PISIDIA
Antioch
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
LYCAONIA
PAMPHYLIA
Perga
Attalia
CILICIA
Tarsus
COS
Cnidus
Rhodes
RHODES
LYCIA
Patara
Myra
Seleucia
Antioch (Starting Place)
SYRIA
CRETE
Phenice
Lasea
C. Salmone
CLAUDA
Fair Havens
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
PHOENICIA
CHALCIS
Damascus
Sidon
Tyre
Ptolemais
GALILEE
Cæsarea
Samaria
Lydda
Jerusalem
JUDAEA
Dead Sea
IDUMAEA
ARABIA
CYRENAICA
LIBYA
MARMARICA
Alexandria
EGYPT
C.S.H. & CO., N.Y.

A.–The journey.

In order to get an idea of the extent of country over which Paul and Silas traveled, let us refer to the accompanying map, and name the districts and cities through which they went. They journeyed from Antioch northward through Syria, and thence westward to Tarsus in Cilicia, his own native country. From here their path led them to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, four cities of Galatia in which converts had been made during their first mission. They were not allowed to preach in the province of Mysia, so Paul thought of going into Bithynia, "but the Spirit suffered them not." Therefore, passing through Mysia they came down to the city of Troas. Here two important things happened. In all probability it was at this place that Luke, the author of the Gospel by St. Luke, first met Paul. Here also Paul had a vision in which he saw a man from Macedonia, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (Acts 16:9) Paul understood this vision as a call to preach to them. Thus, they crossed the Aegean Sea to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi, "the chief city of Macedonia." Philippi is famous as the battlefield where the Roman republic met its death-blow, when the armies of Brutus and Cassius were overthrown by those of Augustus and Anthony. So, for the first time the gospel of Christ was preached in Europe. Later, after some success and trouble they went to Thessalonica, thence to Berea, Athens, and Corinth. After about eighteen months stay at Corinth, Paul left for Ephesus. Following a short visit, Paul sailed for Jerusalem to attend the Passover Feast. After that he returned to Antioch.

B.–Paul's method.

It seems that Paul had a rather consistent plan of campaign. Briefly, we might state it as follows: (1) Wherever possible he sought out important Roman colonies of strategic importance. He would remain in such places, until he had gained some disciples. (2) He began work preaching to the Jews in their own Synagogues. When he did not teach the Mosaic Law, but preached Christ, the Jews in almost every city soon grew angry and opposition began. (3) Then Paul would turn to the Gentiles. He would take with him the Gentile proselytes. With these as a nucleus, he would hire a house or a hall for a new meeting place. (4) Before leaving or else on a return trip, he would perfect the organization and set elders or bishops to manage the new church. (5) When later problems arose he would either revisit the city, or else write a letter to the church at that place. This accounts for his epistles, which are letters directed to local churches. (F. J. Rae, p. 283)

C.–Other important events of the second mission.

1. At Philippi.

   a. "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." (Acts 16:13)

Comment:

Here a woman named Lydia, together with her family, was baptized. So far as we know, these were the first converts to Christianity in Europe.

   b. When Paul healed a girl fortune-teller, her managers objected and brought an accusation against him.

"These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,
"And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." (Acts 16:20, 21)

Comment:

"The colonies were one of the means whereby Rome sought to introduce the Roman spirit and feeling into the provinces, to romanise them." (Ramsay, 218)
To the Romans religion was a state function. Religious liberty was granted, but not the freedom to proselyte. Judaism was a lawful religion for Jews, but not for Romans. Now Paul was, of course, preaching Christianity, both to Jews and Gentiles. So, when complaint came to the magistrates they, fearful that the new doctrine would interfere with their Romanising process, determined to put a stop to it at once. They therefore commanded them to be whipped severely, and to be cast into prison. They must have considered the matter as serious, for they ordered the jailor to make them safe, so he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. These were most unusual prisoners, for about midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns.
"And suddenly there was a great earthquake . . . all the doors were opened." Thereupon the jailor became fearful lest the prisoners had escaped, in which event his own life would be taken by the rulers. The final result, however, was that the jailor and his family were converted.

c. The next morning when the magistrates sent officers to let them go, Paul refused, saying, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." (Acts 16:37)

Comment:

It was against the Roman law to whip a Roman before he had been condemned in a public trial. The magistrates had understood that their prisoners were Jews. When told that they were Romans, these rulers came quickly "and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." (Acts 16:39)

2. At Thessalonica and at Berea.

"... they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." (Acts 17:1, 2)

Comment:

As usual, some of them believed, whereupon envious Jews stirred up the baser element of the city, and even assaulted the house of Jason in an attempt to secure Paul and Silas. They accused the missionaries virtually of treason, for they preached Christianity with Christ as its head. After they released Jason the brethren sent Paul and Silas by night into Berea, where they preached in the Synagogue. But no sooner had they made some converts, than the news spread to Thessalonica. Then the Jews from this city came to Berea to stir up the people. Paul left the city, but Silas and Timotheus remained to carry on the work; for they had made many friends, and the people had received the teachings with readiness.

3. At Athens.

a. "And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." (Acts 17:15, 16)

Comment:

During New Testament times, Athens was in the Roman province of Achaia. Its greatness had faded away, the national spirit had gone, and the people had sunk to inferior abilities. Athens, however, still remained the intellectual center of Greece. While Paul was waiting, he fell into argument and dispute with the great philosophers, both of the Epicureans and the Stoics, who said:

b. " . . . What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." (Acts 17:18)

Comment:

The Epicurean philosophers believed in making the best of the material world by satisfying man's best and highest desires. They were what we call materialists, and believed in many gods who had no real concern for man. They believed that happiness was man's chief aim. Of course, such a system suffered many abuses.

The Stoics were pantheists. They had a very high ethical and moral standard. "They taught that the practice of virtue was the first duty of man." Which of these systems of philosophy would produce great men? Why? These philosophers, Epicureans and Stoics, took Paul to the Areopagus, a court that decided whether a lecturer should be allowed the right to speak in the public places. Here they asked him:

c. "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

"For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean." (Acts 17:19-20)

d. Paul's speech.

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill (arose in the council), and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, *To the Unknown God*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." (Acts 17:22-23)

Read his whole speech in Acts 17:22-31.

Comment:

Paul tactfully challenged their idolatry and belief in many gods. Then he declared his belief in one God, the creator of all things. Further, he spoke of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Then he closed his short address by proclaiming Christ, who was ordained of God and who was then risen from the dead. Of course these philosophers did not believe in resurrection. The idea seemed to some as not worthy of much consideration, so they dismissed it by saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Others were so opposed to it, that they even mocked the idea. Paul understood and realized that he would not be able to do much in Athens. He only remained for about a month or six weeks. Then he proceeded on to Corinth before Silas and Timothy arrived.

4. At Corinth.

a. "After these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth." (Acts 18:1)

Comment:

Corinth was about fifty miles from Athens. It was one of the chief centers of trade of the whole Roman empire. Julius Caesar had made it a Roman "colony." There was much vice in this cosmopolitan city. In fact, to call a man a "Corinthian" was almost equivalent to saying that his character was bad. Here, where there was so much need for the gospel of Christ, Paul labored diligently for eighteen months. At Corinth, he soon found Aquila, with his wife Priscilla, who had been expelled from Rome when Claudius commanded that all Jews must leave. They were tent-makers. This you will remember was Paul's trade also. So Paul lived and worked with them.

Each Sabbath he went to the Synagogue and preached his doctrines. He had been somewhat downcast; but when Silas and Timothy came, he preached with greater vigor, and testified that "Jesus was Christ." The Jews, however, began their customary opposition. Paul grew out of patience, saying, "Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts 18:6)

b. "And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue." (Acts 18:7)

Comment:

Although the Jews opposed Paul, yet the chief ruler of their Synagogue, one Crispus by name, was converted. Also Justus, who no doubt was a proselyte. We can hardly imagine what hatred must have been aroused among the Jews, when Paul established his meeting place next door to the Synagogue.

c. "And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

"Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." (Acts 18:12, 13)

Comment:

We have mentioned previously that Rome granted religious freedom to Romans. Gallio must have known that Paul was a Roman citizen, and being a generous, liberal Roman himself saw that the difficulty was really a Jewish dispute, and not a Roman. When Paul would have defended himself, Gallio thought it not necessary; so he began his answer:

d. " . . . If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

"But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

"And he drave them from the judgment seat." (Acts 18:14-16)

Comment:

Instead of involving Paul, there was a reaction against the Jews by the Greek members. They caught the chief ruler of the Synagogue, and gave him a severe whipping; for he no doubt was one of the leaders against Paul. The situation was therefore in Paul's favor. The Roman deputy would not listen to their Jewish squabble, and a great part of the Greek side of the Jewish Synagogue favored Paul. So he was able to continue his work at Corinth for eighteen months. During this time the work progressed greatly.

Compare Gallio's action with that of Pilate's, when the angry Jews brought Christ before him.

The above events had great significance. "The action of the Imperial government in protecting him (Paul) from the Jews, and (if we are right) declaring freedom in religious matters, seems to have been the crowning fact in determining Paul's line of conduct. According to our view the residence at Corinth was an epoch in Paul's life. As regards his doctrine he became more clearly conscious of its character, as well as more precise and definite in his presentation of it; and as regards practical work he became more clear as to his aim and the means of attaining the aim, namely, that Christianity should be spread through the civilized, i. e., the Roman, world, using the freedom of speech which the Imperial policy as declared by Gallio seemed inclined to permit." (Ramsey, p. 260)

5. At Ephesus.
   a. "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews." (Acts 18:19)

Comment:

Upon leaving Corinth, he took with him Aquila and his wife Priscilla. The people desired him to remain longer, but he would not,

   b. "But bade them farewell, saying, I must by

> all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus." (Acts 18:21)

Comment:

He landed at Caesarea. From here he went up to Jerusalem. After visiting Jerusalem, he returned to Antioch. Thus ended his famous second mission, during which time he had carried the gospel into Europe, where he had established a number of churches.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Paul's second missionary journey.

1. Who went with Paul? Why?
2. Be able to name the principal cities in which Paul worked.

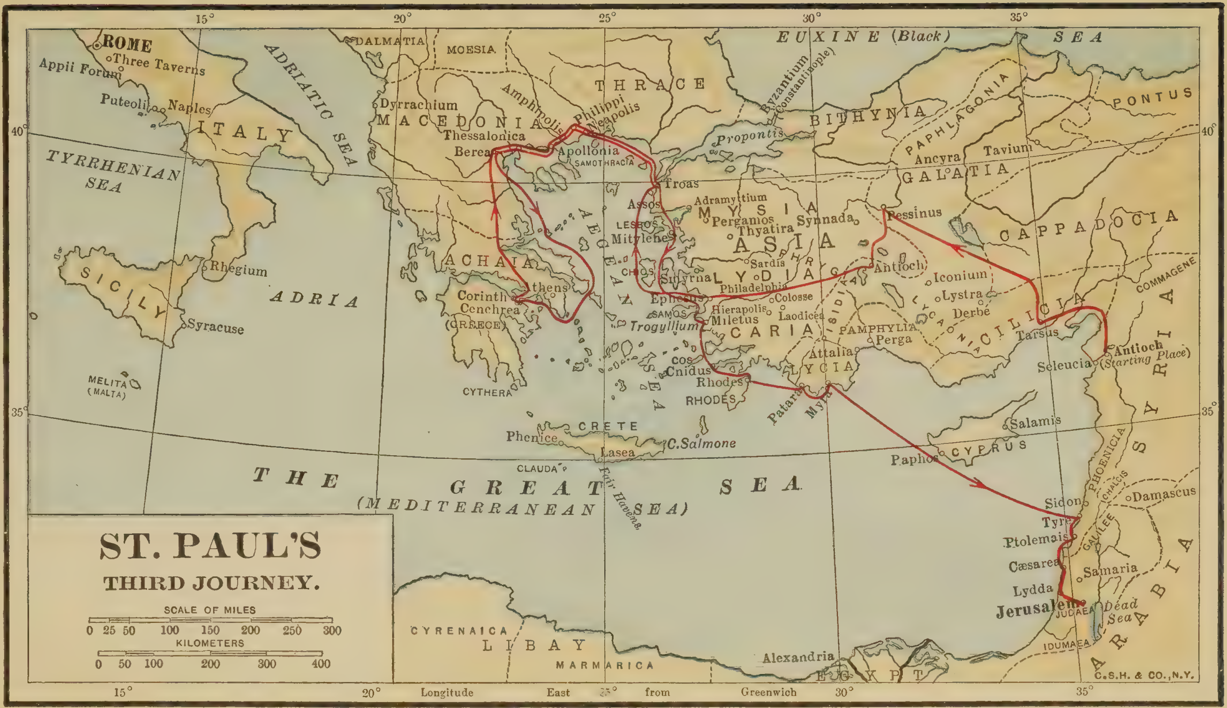
B.–Paul's method.

1. Discuss Paul's plan of work.

C.–Important events.

1. Who were the first converts in Europe?
2. Why did the Jews oppose Paul?
3. What action did the Roman rulers take?
4. What was the result when Paul reminded an officer that he (Paul) was a Roman?
5. Discuss the progress made at Thessalonica and at Berea.
6. What kind of city was Athens?
7. Discuss briefly the belief of the Epicureans and the Stoics.
8. Which of these produced great men? Why?
9. How was it that Paul was asked to speak to them?
10. What did he say? What do you think of his speech? Why?
11. What success did he have? Why?
12. Discuss his labors at Corinth.
13. How did the Roman deputy Gallio protect Paul?

14. What significance may be attached to Paul's experience with Gallio?
15. What were the outstanding accomplishments of this mission?



ST. PAUL'S

THIRD JOURNEY.

SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 100 150 200 250 300
KILOMETERS
0 50 100 200 300 400
15° 20° 25° 30° 35° 40°
Longitude East 25° from Greenwich
ROME
Appii Forum
Three Taverns
Puteoli
Naples
ITALY
TYRRHENIAN SEA
ADRIATIC SEA
ADRIA
SICILY
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
THRACE
Dyrrachium
MACEDONIA
Amphipolis
Philippi
Neapolis
Thessalonica
Berea
Apollonia
SAMOTHRACIA
ACHAIA
Athens
Corinth
Cenchrea
(GREECE)
CYTHERA
AEGEAN SEA
EUXINE (Black) SEA
Byzantium (Constantinople)
Propontis
BITHYNIA
PAPHLAGONIA
PONTUS
Ancyra
Tavium
GALATIA
CAPPADOCIA
COMMAGENE
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
MYSIA
Pergamos
Thyatira
Synnada
Pessinus
LESBOS
Mitylene
CHIOS
ASIA
Sardis
LYDIA
PHRYGIA
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Ephesus
Colosse
Hierapolis
Laodicea
SAMOS
Miletus
Trogyllium
CARIA
PISIDIA
Antioch
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
LYCAONIA
PAMPHYLIA
Perga
Attalia
CILICIA
Tarsus
Antioch (Starting Place)
Seleucia
SYRIA
COS
Cnidus
Rhodes
RHODES
LYCIA
Patara
Myra
CRETE
Phenice
Lasea
C. Salmone
CLAUDA
Fair Havens
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
THE GREAT SEA (MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
PHOENICIA
CHALCIS
Damascus
Sidon
Tyre
Ptolemais
GALILEE
Cæsarea
Samaria
Lydda
Jerusalem
JUDAEA
Dead Sea
IDUMAEA
ARABIA
CYRENAICA
LIBYA
MARMARICA
Alexandria
EGYPT
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Problem 73

THE THIRD MISSION OF PAUL

Problem: What particular things were accomplished by Paul during his third mission?

Bible References: Acts 18:23-28; Acts, chs. 19, 20; 21:1-15.

Problem Considered. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–A general view of Paul's journey.

1. "And after he had spent some time there (Antioch), he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples." (Acts 18:23)

Comment:

It is not necessary to name these cities again. They were referred to in our discussion of the first mission. From Galatia he proceeded to Ephesus, where he had longed to preach, but into which country the Spirit would not allow him to go on his two former missions.

Important things happened here, but we will discuss them later. Leaving Ephesus, he went northward to Troas, according to his words in II Cor. 2:13. He was greatly disappointed when Titus did not meet him there. Leaving Troas, he went into Macedonia.

"And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece." (Acts 20: 2) Note that the cities in Macedonia in which churches had been organized during the second mission were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Then he came to Corinth, where he remained three months. In the spring when the seas were opened for navigation, Paul thought of sailing for Jerusalem to attend the Passover. However, the Jews who intended to sail upon the same ship had plotted to kill him. Learning of this, he changed his plans and decided to return by way of Macedonia. So he revisited Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi. While doing so, the others who intended to accompany him into Asia took another way and remained in Troas for Paul to come. (Acts 20:4)

"And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days." (Acts 20:6)

When they left Troas, they passed through Assos, Mitylene, and finally arrived at Miletus, where the ship remained for a few days. Leaving here, they passed several cities and then set out across the Mediterranean. They landed at Tyre. They tarried here among friends for seven days. Taking ship again, they came to Ptolemais. Finally they reached Caesarea, where they abode with Philip the evangelist. After having been warned of the danger which awaited him and not heeding the warning, Paul went on to Jerusalem.

B.–At Ephesus.

1. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus." (Acts 19:1)

Comment:

Ephesus was the chief city in Asia, the name given to the western province of Asia Minor. When Paul labored there, Ephesus was one of the biggest ports in the world. It was a "free city," with considerable privilege in self-government. This was, however, at the pleasure of Rome. The people worshipped the goddess Diana, a nature-deity, the "great mother." To her they had built one of the most magnificent temples in the world. Again, Ephesus was the headquarters for the confederate Asian cities. Here the emperor was "worshipped" as the symbol of authority, representing both the state and the church.

Just previous to his coming to Ephesus, Paul had revisited the cities in Galatia.

You will remember that during Paul's second mission he had visited Ephesus, where he left Aquila and Priscilla, the faithful saints who had labored with him for eighteen months in Corinth. While he had been absent, Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, eloquent in speech, came to Ephesus. He had evidently only heard and believed in John the Baptist. But Aquila and Priscilla taught him more about Jesus. He no doubt accepted their teaching, for when he went to Corinth they gave him letters of recommendation. When Paul arrived, he found twelve of the disciples of Apollos. These he baptized and confirmed, whereupon the Holy Ghost came upon them and "they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (Acts 19:6)

2. Paul preaches to the Jews at Ephesus.
   a. "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing, and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 19:8)

Comment:

Jewish opposition began, whereupon Paul withdrew, as was his usual plan, and led those who would follow him into the school of one Tyrannus.

"And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10)

   b. The blessing of God was with Paul. During his work in Ephesus, many sick people were miraculously healed. Even the exorcists left off their trade, and burned their books valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver. (Acts 19:19)
   c. The complaint of Demetrius.
   Paul had expected to go into Macedonia. He sent ahead Timotheus and Erastus. Then a contention arose in Ephesus.

   "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;
   "Whom he called together . . . and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.
   "Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away

> much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
>
> "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised . . ." (Acts 19:24-27)

Comment:

The fact that trade in images was decreasing is evidence of the successful work of Paul and his helpers. The churches in Lycos Valley, Laodicea, Colossai and Hierapolis were established at this time. No doubt the seven churches mentioned in Revelation~~s~~ were also the product of this period. (See Ramsay, p. 274)

These people in Asia were idolaters. They believed in shrines and images to the great goddess Diana. The craftsmen made images of Diana in terra-cotta, in marble, and in silver. The wealthy class demanded silver images. Great sums of money had been invested in this trade. "All the trade and religion and prosperity of the city depended upon the worship of Diana. Thus it was that Paul for the first time met up with the problem of 'vested interests' or 'big business'."

d. The riot.

> "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus . . . Paul's companions . . . they rushed with one accord into the theatre." (Acts 19:29)

Comment:

Paul's friends warned him to remain away. After the riot had proceeded for some time, the Jews, attempting to defend themselves, as not being responsible for Paul, put forth one Alexander to speak. This raised a great uproar for some three hours. Finally the town clerk got them to listen to him. He agreed with the cause of the craftsmen, but advised them to proceed against the Christians in the regular legal way; for should news of riots come to the ears of Rome, they would "be called in question for this day's uproar." This would have been a serious thing for a "free city." The people accepted his advice, so he was able to dismiss the assembly. (Acts 19:35-41)

For more than two years Paul had labored faithfully and with great success. However, it was now advisable for him to leave. After calling the disciples together and "embracing them," he left for Macedonia, never to return to Ephesus again. At Philippi, Titus told Paul of conditions in Corinth. Thereupon Paul wrote a letter to them. That letter is now called II Corinthians. Later, when Paul went to Corinth he wrote his epistle to the Galatians. Here also he wrote his letter to the Romans.

e. Paul taking leave of the brethren.

Paul had desired to attend the Passover, but was disappointed when he discovered the plot to kill him. He had resolved to be in Jerusalem for the Pentecost, which would occur fifty days after the Passover. Luke intimates that because of Paul's hurry, he did not stop at Ephesus on his return from Macedonia. However, the ship stopped for a few days at Miletus, whereupon Paul sent for the elders to come from Ephesus.

"And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

"Serving the Lord with all humility . . . And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you . . .

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance . . . and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

"Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every

> city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
>
> "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. . . .
>
> ". . . I know that ye all . . . shall see my face no more. . . .
>
> "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock . . . for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock . . .
>
> "And now, brethren, I commend you to God. . . .
>
> "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.
>
> "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." (Acts 20:18-37)

Comment:

It was a sad parting, for they all realized that they would not see their beloved leader again. After prayer, they went down to the ship with him. And there, when the ship was about to set sail, they clung to him until his companions had to pull him away from them. Thus Paul took leave forever of Ephesus, where he had so successfully preached the gospel.

Paul's statement, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish . . . the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus", is significant. (See Acts 20:24) He had learned the lesson which Christ taught His other Apostles. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (See Mark 8:35)

II.–Organization of Material.

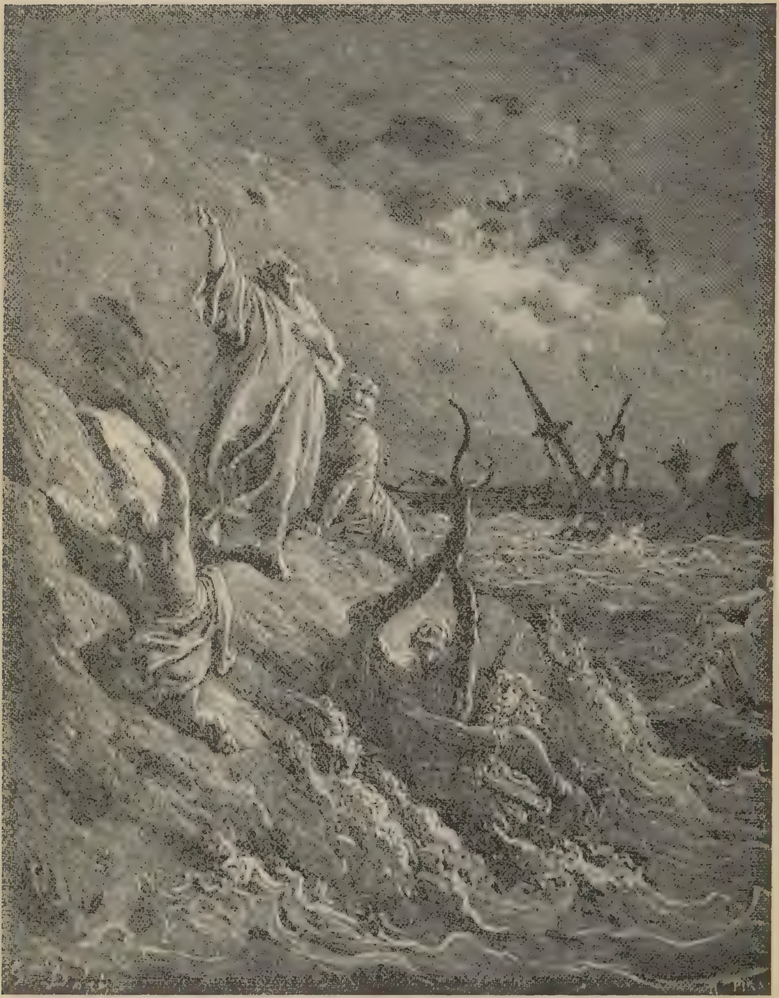
A.–Paul's third journey.

1. Discuss generally the third mission of Paul,

naming the cities through which he traveled.

B.–At Ephesus.

1. Discuss the importance of Ephesus at the time of Paul.
2. Who had been laboring at Ephesus?
3. Explain how Paul's work progressed there.
4. Why did Demetrius complain?
5. What did his complaint indicate with respect to Paul's success?
6. How was the complaint settled?
7. What indicated the love they had for Paul at Ephesus?
8. How did Paul obey Christ's teaching concerning saving and losing life?
9. What were the important results of this third mission?



PAUL SHIPWRECKED

PROBLEM 74

THE CRISIS OF PAUL'S EASTERN MINISTRY

When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, the brethren received him gladly, and they were pleased with his story of what had been accomplished among the Gentiles. He was soon informed, however, that the Jewish members at Jerusalem had heard reports of Paul's preaching in that he had taught the Gentiles to "forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the custom." (Acts 21:21) We call your attention again to the decree of the council concerning this matter. Paul had consistently carried the decision of James to the churches. We intimated in our previous problem concerning this decree that although it was officially settled, yet a large Jewish faction still held to the Law of Moses, and these people would cause trouble later. The brethren realized that these strict Jewish Christians would call Paul to account. They accordingly advised Paul to shave his head and purify himself along with four other men, so that the Jews would see that Paul himself was willing to keep the law and the customs. (Acts 21:24) Paul accepted their counsel, and did all things necessary for ceremonial purification.

PROBLEM: What significance did the crisis at Jerusalem have for Paul? For Christianity?

Bible Reference: Acts, chapters 21-26.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The Jewish accusation.

1. "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw

him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
"Crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place; and further, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." (Acts 21:27, 28)

Comment:

These Jews who were making complaint were members of the Synagogues in Asia. You will remember that everywhere in these cities Paul had difficulty with the Jews, and had to leave them and carry on the work among the Gentiles. Roman law protected Paul there, but here in Jerusalem they hoped to effect his death.

2. "And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:
"Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul." (Acts 21:31, 32)

Comment:

It is impossible for us to realize the fanaticism in olden times. Neither can we understand how the observance of customs could be considered of greater value than life. It seems, however, that the Jews everywhere were quite willing to kill the person who offended custom. On the other hand, the great Roman government, standing for religious freedom, frequently was called to protect even a Jew from his own people.

B.–Paul's defense before the people.

1. After the soldiers had bound Paul and were leading him into the castle, he asked, May I speak unto thee? The captain replied, Canst thou speak Greek? and he inquired who he was. "But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of

Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people." (Acts 21:37-39)

2. "Paul stood on the stairs" . . . and "spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue." (Acts 21:40)

Comment:

He rehearsed briefly his first vision, and how it was that he left off persecuting the disciples and became himself a follower of Christ. Read his defense in Acts 22:1-24.

3. The soldiers learn that Paul is a Roman.
"And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" (Acts 22:25)

Comment:

We have referred to the Roman custom in a previous problem. We repeat that after a man had been tried before a Roman tribunal and had been condemned, the preliminary to execution was scourging. But to scourge a Roman uncondemned was not lawful.
"Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea." (Acts 22:27)
After making sure, the examiners departed, leaving Paul guarded for the night.

C.–The Roman captain desired the accusation of the Jews.

1. "On the morrow, because he (the chief captain) would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council (Sanhedrin) to appear." (Acts 22:30)

Comment:

Before the Roman tribunal would hold court, the law required a definite accusation. This the captain now demanded. However, when Paul was brought before the council and began to say that he had lived in all good conscience before God, the high priest Ananias commanded someone who stood near to smite Paul in the mouth. "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" (Acts 23:3) Paul, however, partly apologized by his words in Acts 23:5.

2. The council was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees. Paul knew the question which would always pit one against the other, so he said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." (Acts 23:6) There arose a contention at once between these opposing parties. Through it Paul secured the help of the Pharisees, for they said: "We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." (Acts 23:9)
3. Paul's consolation.
   "And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11)
4. The vow of the conspirators.
   Some forty Jews vowed that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. In order to accomplish their deed, they said, " . . . ye (chief priests), with the council, signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we . . . are ready to kill him." (Acts 23:15)

Comment:

Some way or other, Paul's sister's son heard of the plot and secured permission to tell Paul. Whereupon Paul secured permission for him to tell the matter to the chief captain.

D.–Paul taken before the Roman authorities.

1. "And he (chief captain) called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;
   "And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor." (Acts 23:23, 24)

Comment:

The captain then addressed a letter to Felix, explaining the difficulty as it had developed in Jerusalem. Furthermore, he made it clear that he had found no charge worthy of death or of bonds.

2. "I will hear thee," said the governor, "when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall." (Acts 23:35)

E.–Paul's trial before Felix.

1. The Jewish accusation.
   It was presented by Tertullus, a Jewish orator.
   " . . . we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:
   "Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law." (Acts 24:5, 6)

Comment:

They accused Paul falsely of taking a Gentile into the sacred Temple. This would have defiled it, and was punishable by death. In any Roman court, the accused had the right to answer the accusation. Accordingly, the governor beckoned to Paul to make his plea.

2. Paul's speech before Felix.

a. "Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself." (Acts 24:10)

" . . . And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

"Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me." (Acts 24:12, 13)

Comment:

Paul here challenged them to prove that he had done anything wrong in Jerusalem. Felix had no jurisdiction in Asia minor. This Paul knew. Therefore, any complaint coming from Asia minor would be invalid.

b. Paul, however, admitted that he worshipped in a way which the Jews called heresy; but that he was not guilty:

"Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day." (Acts 24:21)

Comment:

Felix reserved any judgment until he could talk to the chief captain. The governor let Paul have his liberty, under guard. Frequently, Felix sent for Paul and talked with him concerning faith in Christ and the resurrection. He hoped, according to Acts 24:26, to have received money from Paul. This, together with the treatment given to Paul, Wm. Ramsay thinks is an evidence that Paul was well to do, and conducted himself so as to command attention of the ruler, a thing which a poor man could not have done. Paul was kept a prisoner for two years. During the meantime, Porcius Festus had replaced Felix as governor.

F.–Paul before Festus.

1. Soon after Festus became governor, the Jews desired him to bring Paul to Jerusalem. Festus, however, having no doubt been previously in-

formed, said that Paul should be kept at Caesarea. "And when he (Festus) had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat, commanded Paul to be brought." (Acts 25:6)

Comment:

The accusers came down from Jerusalem, and accused him of many things. Paul in his reply denied their charges.

2. Appeal to Caesar.
   a. "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" (Acts 25:9)
   b. Paul replied, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. "For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar." (Acts 25:10, 11)

G.–Paul tried before king Agrippa.

1. "And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea, to salute Festus." (Acts 25:13)

Comment:

After many days, Festus told the story of the trouble to the king, and explained that Paul had appealed to Caesar. But Agrippa desired to try the case. On the next day, king Agrippa took his place in the judgment hall, with great pomp and show. The chief captains and leading men of the city were admitted. Then Paul was led into the courtroom, and permitted to speak before the king.

2. Paul's speech.
   a. "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:
      "Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." (Acts 26:2, 3)
   b. Paul told his story again in a clear and forceful manner. Read it in Acts 26:1-23.
   c. "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.
      " . . . I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Then turning to the king he said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." (Acts 26:24-27)
   d. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28)
   e. Result.
      The verdict was, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.
      "Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar." (Acts 26:31, 32)

Comment:

Thus ended a series of trials, with an acquittal. But the appeal had previously been made; therefore they delivered Paul, along with other prisoners, to one Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band, with the command to proceed to Rome.

H.–The significance of these trials.

1. Paul's case had been tried before the supreme court. What was decided would become a rather binding precedent, until it might be over-

ruled by Imperial authority. This precedent was the more strengthened because two governors, Felix and Festus, and king Agrippa all had acquitted Paul.

2. This virtually meant that it was permissible to teach Christianity.
   "The trial, therefore, was really a charter of religious liberty and therein lies its immense importance." (Ramsay, p. 308)

II. –Organization of Material.
  A.–The Jewish accusation.
    1. At Jerusalem, what accusation did the Jews make against Paul?
    2. Who made the complaint?
    3. How was Paul rescued?
  B.–Paul's defense before the people.
    1. What defense did Paul make?
    2. What saved him from a scourging?
  C.–The Roman trial.
    1. Before whom was Paul first taken?
    2. How did Paul effect disagreement between the Jews, and gain the support of the Pharisees?
    3. What consolation came to Paul?
    4. What vow did forty Jews make? How did they attempt to carry it out?
  E.–Paul before Felix.
    1. What accusation was made before Felix the governor?
    2. How did Paul answer?
  F.–The trial before Festus.
    1. What did Festus want to do?
    2. What appeal did Paul make?
  G.–King Agrippa tried the case.
    1. What was the result?
  H.–Significance.
    1. What significance did the trials with their acquittal have upon Paul and Christianity?

Problem 75

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

When Christ and His Apostles taught only in the cities of Galilee, Peraea, and Judea, it was possible to revisit the people often. However, when Christianity began to spread far into distant countries, as it did through the labors of Paul, revisitation became perilous and often impossible. Nor was sending others for this work entirely satisfactory. So Paul found it necessary and advisable to write letters to the churches which he had established. There are thirteen of these letters which are ascribed definitely to Paul. They are arranged in the New Testament according to their length, beginning with Romans, the longest, and ending with Philemon. There are also epistles written by some of the other Apostles, such as Peter, John, and James. It is interesting to note briefly some of the reasons why these letters were written.

Problem: Where, when, and why did Paul write his epistles to the Thessalonians?

Bible Reference: I and II Thessalonians.

Problem Considered.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–When and where was Thessalonians written?

1. Paul was on his second mission. He had gone through Macedonia, where he had established small churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Then he had been forced to leave. He went to Athens for a short time, about one month or six weeks. Leaving here, he arrived at Corinth, where he labored eighteen months. It was during this time, about 51 A. D., that Paul wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians.

B.–Why Paul wrote Thessalonians.

1. While at work at Corinth, Paul did not forget the Saints in Thessalonica. Since he had received severe persecution there, he feared the members would have difficulty also. Finally, he sent Timotheus northward to visit them. (I Thess. 3:2) When he returned, he brought a good report of their faith and charity, which comforted Paul. (I Thess. 3:6-8) He must have also reported some conditions which were unfavorable. At any rate, Paul thought it necessary to send them a letter. We can imagine with what eagerness the Saints read it and reread it when it came.
2. The main points of interest.
    a. Paul expressed his love and appreciation for their steadfastness under persecution. This, by the way, is the first mention of persecution of Christians by the heathens. He was glad to know they were bearing it nobly, and encouraged them to remain faithful in Christ.
    b. There were tendencies, however, that needed to be corrected. Paul used this means of instructing them. In some way these Saints had come to believe that Christ would reappear in a very short time. Possibly they had misunderstood Paul's words, when he preached to them at Thessalonica. Be that as it may, some feared that their friends who had died would miss the happiness of meeting Jesus when He came. Paul wrote them concerning this problem. (I Thess. 4:13-18) Again, he called to their attention the decree of the council at Jerusalem, that they abstain from idolatry and fornications. (I Thess. 4:1-7) These were ever-present dangers to Gentile members who had been brought up under pagan ritual.

c. In his first letter Paul had with great enthusiasm spoken of Christ's coming in glory. Some members had misunderstood and held the idea that the coming of Christ was at hand. Consequently, some had fallen into idle waiting, thereby becoming dependent on the Church and its industrious members. Living in idleness, some fell into unworthy habits, thereby bringing the Church into disrepute. It was to correct these tendencies that Paul found it necessary to write a second letter some few weeks after sending the first. This letter is now called II Thessalonians.

We see from these letters with what love and interest Paul threw his whole soul into his mission. He did not foresee that his epistles would sometime be thought worthy to be classed as scripture. However, as time went on, his letters became more and more valuable. Finally, they were included in our New Testament. Thus these letters, being the first Christian writing, mark the beginning of Christian literature.

II.–Organization of Material.
  A.–Letter to the Thessalonians.
    1. When and where was Thessalonians written?
  B.–Why Paul wrote.
    1. Why did Paul write this letter?
    2. Be able to discuss the problems which were troubling the Thessalonians, and to give in substance Paul's answers to them.

PROBLEM 76

A RELIGION FREE FROM JUDAISM

PROBLEM: What condition developed in the Galatian churches, which inspired Paul's epistle to the Galatians?

Bible Reference: Galatians, chapters 1-6.

PROBLEM CONSIDERED.

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The cause of trouble in Galatian churches.

1. When Paul returned to Antioch in Syria following his second mission, he learned again of the division between those who were Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. The old question of the observance of the Mosaic Law of circumcision had again become prominent. Certain Christians of Jewish birth had gone into the Galatian churches at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. While Paul was absent, they had sown seeds of contention. They held that Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ was dangerous and heretical. Furthermore, they taught that Paul was not an apostle, and therefore an unauthorized teacher of Christ. Then they explained that in order to receive the blessings of the gospel, one "must be an heir of Abraham; that is, one must be born a Jew or become one by accepting the rite of circumcision and being adopted into the Jewish people." (Goodspeed, p. 8)

   We are uncertain where Paul was when he learned of the condition of confusion in the Galatian churches. Goodspeed suggests that he was probably in Antioch in Syria. Likely Paul could not visit them at once, so he had to dictate his letter, which was sent to them by messenger.

B.–Paul's answer.

1. Claim of authority.
   "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.
   "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . when it pleased God . . . To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen . . . " (Gal. 1:11, 12, 15, 16)
2. The question of Jewish ritual.
   He rehearsed the incident of the great council at Jerusalem, at which meeting the Apostles had given the decree containing the four requirements of Gentile Christians.
   "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." (Gal. 2:9)

Comment:
Thus, both by divine call and later by authorization from the heads of the Church, Paul proved his authority.

3. His argument against the teachings of the Jewish Christians.
   a. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2) He then called their attention to the fact that the miracles which had been performed in their midst came by faith, not by the Law. (Gal. 3:5) So also would the promise to

Abraham come through Christ, and not by observance. (Gal. 3:7-23) The Law, he continued, was merely a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Then he declared the great principle of unity in the Church. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) Finally, he struck the problem a direct blow.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. . . .

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Gal. 5:6, 14)

b. His appeal for Christian virtues.
   (1) The works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:17-21)
   (2) The fruits of the spirit.

> "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
>
> "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23)

Comment:

This is one of Paul's most forceful and vehement letters. (Acts 11:6-8) He recognized the importance and dangers of the disturbance. In a word, he would set Christianity free from Judaistic law, custom, and sacrifice, which had strangled the spirit of Judaism. He stood, therefore, as one of the first, if not the first, champions of religious freedom.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–Cause of trouble in Galatia.

1. In Paul's absence what had happened to stir up contention in the Galatian churches?

B.–Paul's answer.

1. Discuss Paul's answer.
2. What was his argument against the claims of the Jewish Christians?
3. What did he say about the universal character of Christianity?
4. In what way was his answer significant?

Problem 77

TROUBLES IN CORINTH

Problem: What conditions prevailed in Corinth, which stimulated Paul to write the letters to the Corinthians?

Bible References: I Cor. 1:10-14; 3; 5; I Cor. 6:1-5; I Cor. 5:1-12; I Cor., ch. 7 and 8; I Cor. 11:5-16; 11:20-31; ch. 12, 13, 15; II Cor. 11:22-27; II Cor. 7:5-9.

Problem Considered. (Two class periods)

I.–Assimilative Material.

A.–The setting.

1. Paul was on his third mission. You will remember that he labored in Ephesus for more than two years. Corinth was situated directly west across the Aegean Sea. As he worked, reports came to him about troubles that had developed among the Corinthian members. For some reason he could not at this time go to Corinth. Hence, he dictated the letter known now as the first epistle to the Corinthians.

B.–The troubles.

1. When Apollos left Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla had given him letters of introduction to the Corinthian Saints. During his sojourn there, some of the Saints began to think more of Apollos than of Paul. This belief might have been stimulated by Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, who during this time had been active against Paul, and had everywhere spread doubt concerning his apostleship.

   Hearing of this condition, Paul made his answer. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith,

I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" . . . "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (I Cor. 1:12, 13; 3:5)

2. Business disputes had also caused ill feelings among the members. Some had resorted to law. Paul advised that they find a just man among them who might sit as judge to settle matters in a brotherly way. (I Cor. 6:1-5)
3. The worst trouble of all was the question of immoral conduct. It was hard for these Gentile Christians to adjust their lives so as to be in harmony with Christian ideals of love and purity. They required help, encouragement, and advice. Paul taught them to flee from fornication. He held up to them the great Christian ideal that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. As such, it must be kept pure. (I Cor. 5:1-13)

C.–Many other questions called for answer.

1. They had their social problems. Should they marry or remain single? Should a husband or a wife remain in marriage, if one or the other were not a Christian? (I Cor., ch. 7)
2. Was it right to eat meat which had first been offered as sacrifice to heathen gods? This question he answered in I Cor., ch. 8.
3. The question of the importance of women in public worship had arisen. How were they to conduct themselves in it? (I Cor. 11:5-16)
4. Even the Lord's Supper was being perverted; for some had become so forgetful of its purpose as to eat and drink excessively. Paul instructs them in the proper procedure. (I Cor. 11:20-31)
5. The Corinthians were particularly interested in

spiritual gifts. Some were maintaining that to speak in tongues was a greater gift than prophecy. Paul referred to the diversity of gifts, but he declared that the same power of God was in all of them. Each was important in its place. (I Cor., ch. 12)

6. He led them from their petty disputes to a consideration of some of the great Christian ideals. Thus, in a most skillful and sublime way he gave his idea of three great Christian virtues: "faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." These have far greater values than any gifts of the Spirit. They are the great Christian virtues. (I Cor., ch. 13)
7. Finally, he came to the subject which was dearest to his heart. In a masterful way he explained the resurrection of Christ. He began by calling their attention to the appearances of Christ after He has risen. He was seen by Peter, by the twelve Apostles, by five hundred brethren, by James, and then again by all the Apostles. "And last of all," he said, "he was seen of me." The fact that Paul's whole life was changed from a strict Pharisee to an energetic champion of Jesus is the strongest evidence that he had seen the Christ. Continuing the argument, Paul says:

   "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

   "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

   "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain . . .

   "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

   "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (I Cor. 15:12, 13, 14, 19, 20)

Throughout the whole fifteenth chapter Paul continued his explanation, and his testimony that Christ had risen. He was the firstfruits, but all mankind would likewise be raised.

Comment:

As we have seen, there were many different problems and petty disputes in Corinth. Paul hoped that he might strengthen their faith and answer their questions. Accordingly, his letter lacks unity in theme. It had to deal with many themes. Nowhere more than here did Paul show such power and skill as a teacher. "Nowhere does the early church with its faults and its problems rise before us so plainly and clearly as here. Someone has said that Paul's letters enable us to take the roof off the meeting-places of the early Christians and look inside. More than any other book of the New Testament it is First Corinthians that does this." (Goodspeed, p. 18)

D.–Reasons for writing II Corinthians, chapter 10-13.

It is strange that a letter, forceful as First Corinthians is, was doomed to failure so far as effecting unity among the Saints at Corinth was concerned. Some remained steadfast with Paul, but the majority yielded to this or that view of the contending parties. Goodspeed (p. 20) suggests that because of this condition Paul wrote a second brief letter from Ephesus. "This letter is what we know as the last four chapters of Second Corinthians." He was forced to champion his own labors. He recognized that boasting was a foolish thing, yet in self-defense he resorted to it. In comparing himself with the others who would belittle his labors and authority, he said:

1. Paul must defend himself.

"Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israel-

ites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.
"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.
"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.
"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck . . .
"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren:
"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (II Cor. 11:22-27)

Comment:

This he must have said to convince them of his sincerity and love in the gospel, for he was willing to suffer much that faith in Christ might be established.
He sent this letter to Corinth by his faithful co-laborer, Titus. He was expecting soon to go to Troas, where he desired to meet Titus, with a report concerning the effect of his letter. After some little time had passed, he went to Troas, but was greatly disappointed because Titus did not meet him there. Paul's anxiety forced him to move on. He crossed the Aegean and came again into Macedonia. Here, somewhere possibly at Philippi, he met Titus, who had brought encouraging and comforting news that the Saints were rejecting the others who had been sowing discord. They were returning to Paul and his teachings of Christ. (II Cor. 7:5-9)

E.–Paul's last letter to the Corinthians.

Paul could not now refrain from sending them another letter. "It constitutes the first nine chapters of Second Corinthians." (Goodspeed,

p. 24) He informed them how much he had suffered because of their trouble. Furthermore, that he had decided not to visit them until he could come in good spirits. Now that good news had come, he proposed soon to revisit Corinth. In love and faith he would come to minister unto them again, that their faith in Christ might be strengthened, that salvation might be assured.

II.–Organization of Material.

A.–The setting.

1. Where and when did Paul write I Corinthians?

B.–The troubles in Corinth.

1. What trouble developed in Corinth because of Apollos and the Jewish Christians?
2. What was Paul's defense?
3. Give his advice to them concerning business troubles.

C.–Other questions.

1. What was Paul's advice to them about marriage? Why?
2. How did Paul's recommendation regarding the eating of meat, which had first been offered as sacrifice, agree with James' decision at the council in Jerusalem?
3. What was the instruction to the Corinthians regarding women's conduct in public worship?
4. How had they perverted the Sacrament? What was his remedy?
5. In what way had they misunderstood spiritual gifts?
6. What virtues did Paul say were greatest?
7. State Paul's evidence for believing that Jesus had risen.
8. Was Paul's letter successful in establishing harmony at Corinth?

9. What was the general substance in Paul's second letter from Ephesus?
10. What news did Titus bring back concerning Paul's second letter?
11. Where did he meet Titus?
12. Where, when, and for what purpose did Paul write the II Corinthians?
13. What do Paul's letters teach us concerning the quality of early Christian character?
14. Why is this an opportune place to pause in our study of Christianity?

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Paul's work in the eastern field was done. He had carried the gospel of Christ into Asia Minor and into Macedonia. During this time he had found it necessary to write letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. He had, more than anyone else, championed the idea that salvation would come through faith in Christ, and not by Mosaic ceremonies and ritual. Largely through his efforts and those of Peter and James and Barnabas, Christianity had moved forward. It was fast separating itself from Judaism to become a new world religion. Finally, Paul at Jerusalem, under trial before Festus, had appealed to Caesar. Henceforth his fate rested in the west.

So a new outlook confronted both Paul and the Church. We pause at this point in our study.

GENERAL SUMMARY

We have studied the greatest period of religious development in the history of the world. That movement began back, far back in history, when God made his promise to Abraham, that through him and his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. In fulfilment of that promise centuries thereafter, God sent Jesus, the Christ. Mankind received through His wonderful life three great blessings: (1) He taught the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. (2) Upon this basis Christ built a system of ethics and religion, which in greatness far surpassed anything which has ever come to the world before or since. (3) In some ways, which we do not understand, God gave Christ power over life; that is, He had power after death to rise again. Furthermore, this did not apply alone to Him. He was the first fruits. But through Him all mankind would rise after death, according to the pattern and time set by the Father. Thus, Christ accomplished His greatest task, namely, He broke the bands of death. This being true, He established the principle of immortality and eternal life of man.

It was difficult to get men to believe and to accept what He had done. Even the Apostles, whom He had chosen, never seemed to understand until upon the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came to them. At that time their faith was vitalized. Henceforth, they feared no man, but were happy, even in persecution, to serve their great Leader.

Quite naturally, this people loved their great progenitor, Abraham. It was hard, therefore, for them to believe that One greater than Abraham had come, the One through whom the promise would be fulfilled. At first those who came to believe in Christ desired also to retain the Laws of Abraham and Moses, that through their observance they would secure the promise. This policy would have made the Church of Christ a sect of Judaism. His system had a greater destiny. Such men as Stephen, Philip, Peter, and finally Paul, came to a better understanding of the scope of Christ's message. The idea under the leadership of the Apostles, and championed particularly by Paul, crystallized. Christianity was for all mankind, all were equal before the Lord. This being the case, salvation would not come through observance of the old Mosaic law of circumcision, but through faith in Jesus Christ. When this idea was understood, Christianity was set free from Judaism. Henceforth, it was destined to become the greatest of all universal religions, and He, the founder of it, the greatest Teacher of all time.

O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me to bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong.

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.

—*Washington Gladden*, 1879.

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